DULCIMER PLAYERS news

The Journal for Hammered and Fretted Dulcimer Enthusiasts

Vol. 29, No. 2 ★ May 2003–July 2003

$6.00

Jim Taylor: An Appalachian Artist

In this issue...

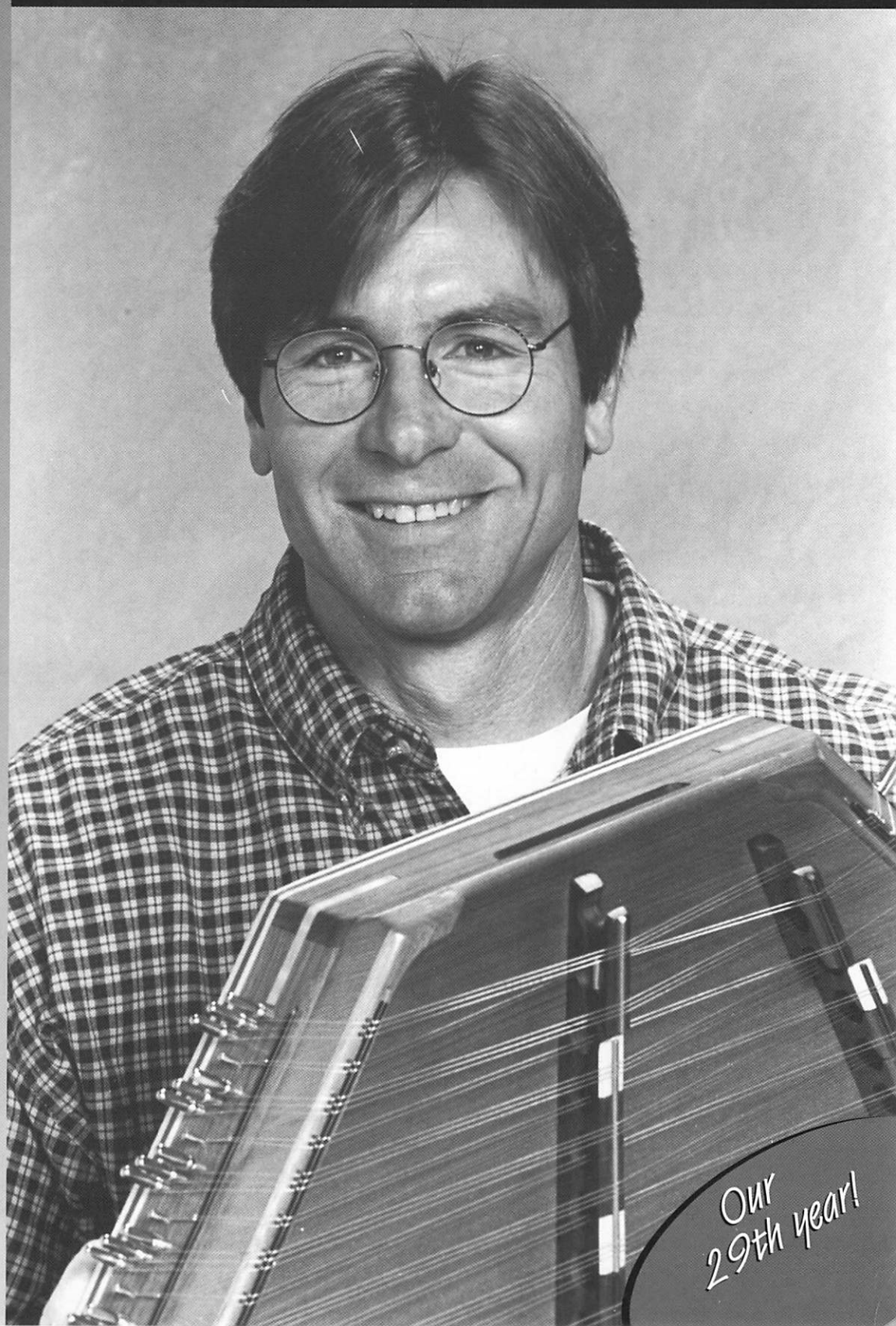
- ★ Many, Many Dulcimer Events for Spring and Summer
- ★ Learn New Dulcimer Playing Skills
- ★ Changing Strings on the Mountain Dulcimer
- ★ Playing Cajun Music on the Mountain Dulcimer
- ★ Classical Spanish Guitar Music on the Hammered Dulcimer

Meet...

- ★ Bill Collins
- ★ Jim Taylor

Plus...

- ★ Music, Reviews, and more...



Our 29th year!

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Dulcimer Players News

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May 2003–July 2003

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Hammer Dulcimer • **Linda Lowe Thompson**

Mountain Dulcimer History • **Ralph Lee Smith**

Hammered Dulcimer History • **Paul Gifford**

What's New/Musical Reviews
Neal Walters

The Art of Performing • **Steve Schneider**

Profiles • **Rosamond Campbell**

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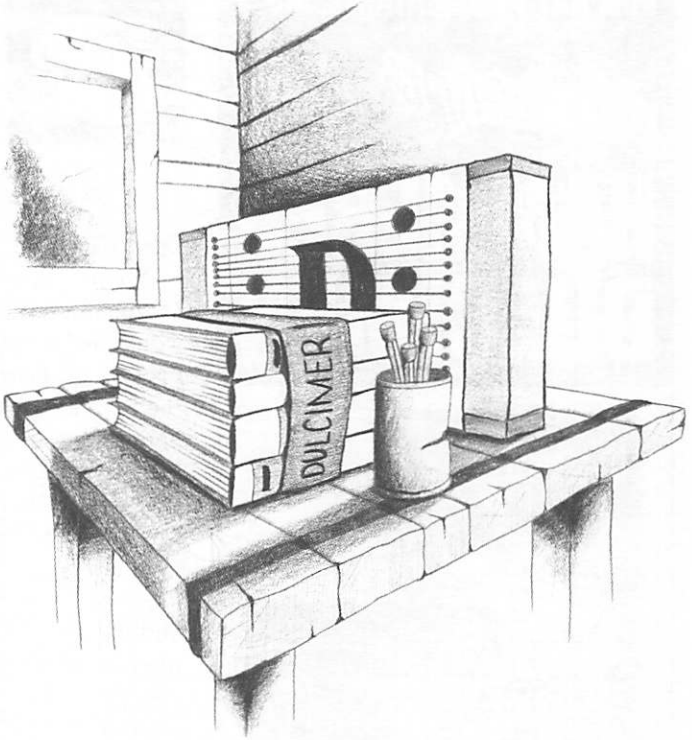
Dear Readers



Recently a dulcimer friend and I were talking about dramatic (read: traumatic) arts moments that befell us in our childhoods. I was kicked out of piano lessons around age eight because I "didn't have a drop of musical talent in my body." My mother was advised not to waste her money on music lessons for me.

There were lots of reasons why I wasn't doing too well, but I was simply written off without conversation or encouragement. Or explorations into my abilities or interests. However, I really wanted to play the piano, so I taught myself. Ask me sometime and I'll play you a tune.

My friend's long-remembered event happened during art class. Given the assignment of drawing a picture, she did the standard house, trees, and sun. But with a stroke of whimsy she included a smiley face on the sun. The teacher picked up the drawing and publicly chided her for putting a face on the sun!

Hearing this, my thoughts ran toward the lost opportunities. There are teachers I know who would have looked at the picture and said, "You put a smile on the sun's face. That makes the picture very happy. Does the sun make you happy? What else in the yard makes you smile? Could you add some of them to your picture?" My friend would have been positively encouraged to try drawing something new, expanding her horizons.

Another friend, who is blind, was mesmerized by the sound of the hammered dulcimer and expressed an interest in learning to play it. She was told that one has to be sighted to play a hammered dulcimer. Fortunately she disregarded his words of "wisdom" and set about following her dream. Fortunately I had the opportunity to work with her, and I know she taught me more about intuitive playing than I taught her!

I know so many devoted, encouraging, talented teachers who, in addition to sharing their performing skills, help others learn to express themselves through the arts. In celebration of the music in our lives and those who guide us, we'll have a number of teaching articles for both dulcimers in the months to come.

In the meantime I encourage you to thank the teachers who have inspired you—and to pass along some of the skills you enjoy (gardening? painting? needlework? carpentry?) to someone who has reached out to you—either by asking or by putting a smiling face on the sun!

Maddie MacNeil

NETWORKING

Closing dates for the August–October 2003 DPN
(To be mailed to subscribers in mid-July)

Information for News & Notes, Letters, Music Exchange, etc: May. 5th

Unclassified Ads: May. 5th

Display Ads: May. 5th (space reservation), May. 15th (camera-ready copy)

Ad Prices

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45¢ per word. 4 issues paid in advance without copy changes: 20% discount.

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1/12 page $35	1/6 page $70
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For inquiries concerning interviews and articles, contact us for details and a style sheet. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome. For returns of manuscripts, photos, or artwork, please enclose a stamped envelope; otherwise DPN is not responsible for their eventual fate. The DPN reserves the right to edit all manuscripts for length and clarity. The opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of the Dulcimer Players News.

Technical Dulcimer Questions
Sam Rizzetta
Rizzetta Music
PO Box 530
Inwood, WV 25428

Recordings and Books for Review
Neal Walters
12228 Hollowell Church Road
Greencastle, PA 17225

News and Notes, Letters, Events, Clubs
Dulcimer Players News
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Winchester, VA 22604

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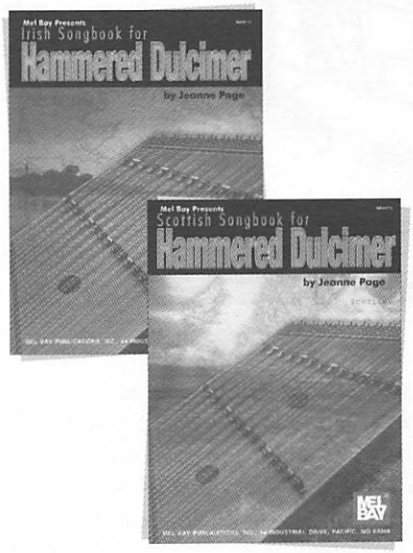

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Letters To Us

Dear DPN:

My friend, Carol, and I are looking for hammered dulcimer players who would like to get together with us to play music. Carol and I are both in the learning phase, and it would be helpful to play with others. Carol lives in Wappingers Falls, New York (845-462-3629, billeb@optonline.net). I live in Hyde Park, New York (845-229-5834, howdolores@juno.com).

Presently we practice during the day and in each other's homes. If you are interested in joining us, please contact either Carol or me.

Dolores Tubbs

Corrections to the February–April 2003 (Vol. 29, No. 1) Dulcimer Players News.

You've heard about gremlins. They were with us as the issue was prepared and printed. At first I was concerned when I learned that the pink insert was printed incorrectly and was in the wrong place. Then I learned about problems with the "Star Of The East" and "Juanita" arrangements. Things happened and we didn't catch them. We'll gladly provide you with correct copies of the music. Visit our website (www.dpnews.com) or e-mail us directly at dpn@dpnews.com for pdf files. If computers aren't in your life, we'll send you correct copies of the music by mail.

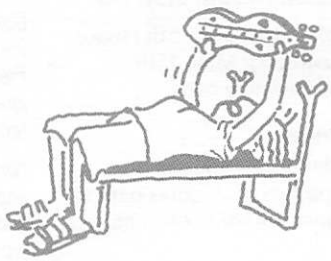
Whenever I get upset about a problem with a DPN issue, I remember the statement I saw many years ago in a major magazine: "Warning. *Do Not Make* the (I forget the food item) according to the recipe printed in our previous issue. Botulism poisoning is possible."

News & Notes

David James, of South Bend, Indiana, made two trips to Ireland within two months in 2002. In July, he was a performer and teacher at the hammered dulcimer festival held in Cork. In September David won his third All-Ireland championship on the dulcimer in the Senior Rogha Ghleas (choice of instruments) category at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (Festival of Irish Traditional Music) in Listowel. The Rogha Ghleas included a recorder, two fife players, an Irish bouzouki, a club accordion, and a mandolin-banjo. According to David, "They want to have a class of competition in which the odd corners of tradition can find a home." Congratulations, David!

In addition to the dulcimer, David plays fiddle, guitar, banjo, Irish bouzouki, concertina, bodhran, and harmona. In addition to familiar hammered dulcimer playing styles, he uses dampers, fiddlers' five-note rolls, plucking with one hand while hammering with the other, and a fiddle bow for a droning sound! For information about David's music and his recordings, visit www.tiompanalley.com.

Maureen Sellers, through the Louisville Dulcimer Society newsletter, recommends a delightful alphabet book she found, It is *A Is For Appalachia* by Linda Hager Pack (with illustrations by Pat Banks), Harmony House Publishing, Prospect, Kentucky. Yes, "D" is for dulcimer!



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Dulcimer Clubs

The Western North Carolina Dulcimer Collective

Mountain and hammered dulcimer players from the Asheville area, will celebrate its twentieth year in May. Newsletters are sent to members quarterly, and learning CDs of the newsletter tunes are made. Now available are 1996–1997, 1998–1999, and 2000–2001 CDs. For details about the club and the CDs, visit their website at www.EverythingDulcimer.com/wncdc

Dear DPN:

A little over a year ago, three of us decided to play our dulcimers at our church picnic. We were all beginners, but enjoy playing together. Many people came by to hear us and several decided they would like to join us. Since that time, we have grown to nearly twenty-five, with probably over half of those playing regularly. The club now has a name: **The Olde Tyme Strummers.** We do not have a teacher, but are learning together. Last year, four us went to the Western Carolina Mountain Dulcimer week in Cullowhee and this year, we are encouraging others to join us.

We have performed at our church on a Wednesday night program and are planning to play at the Johnson Farms Festival this year. We meet at the First United Methodist Church every Thursday night from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. with our new players meeting thirty minutes earlier for instruction. The church is located at the corner of Sixth Ave. West and Buncombe street (204 Sixth Ave. West) in Hendersonville, NC. Leaders are Joy and Al Williams and you can contact us at 828-692-0276.

Al Williams

Dear DPN:

The **Louisville Dulcimer Society** began its formal existence in 1978 as a group of friends who had taken dulcimer lessons. They decided to form the society for the promotion and preservation of traditional music. LDS exists today with approximately two hundred family memberships.

In 1997, a large group of LDS members recorded a cassette tape for use by the club. In May, 2002, forty-two members participated in producing a CD entitled *Take '02.* It was recorded and mixed by Gary Gallier of Dancing Thumb Studio.

The CD includes many of the songs played most often by the membership at large and several individual performances of songs enjoyed but not played as frequently by the larger group. Each member received at no cost two CDs, as will new members. Because the recording was made basically as a tool for LDS members, it is not for sale to the public. However, we encourage other clubs to consider this rewarding venture.

Karl Sebree
Louisville, Kentucky

New Dulcimer Clubs

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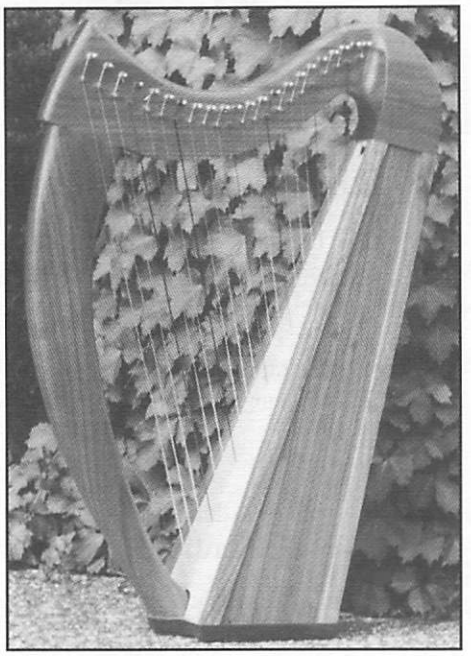

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Musical Reviews

Neal Walters

Michael Shull's passion is gospel and praise music on the mountain dulcimer. His *Hymns of Praise* series has inspired many of you, I know, and his newest release, **Dulcimer Christmas,** is a seasonal album that sets a new standard of excellence for Christmas music on the dulcimer. All the selections are standards, but they take on new life in his hands. The album has a lush, full sound due in large part to some fine accompanying musicians playing on violin, harp, bass, flute, guitar and percussion behind Michael's lead dulcimer.

While Steve Seifert's first album was totally traditional in nature, **Mode for Dulcimer** explores Steve's wide-ranging and eclectic interest in other kinds of music including Bluegrass, country, blues, celtic and jazz in addition to old-time. You've heard him do many of these tunes in concert and he tears them up as usual. With help from whistling champion Emily Eagan, and from old-time banjo player Dave Cannon, he takes you on a fantastic trip from Baby Elephant Walk to the Tennessee Waltz by way of Kaw-Liga and Ghost Riders in the Sky. He mixes jaw-dropping flatpicking speed and technique with sensitive fingerpicking arrangements in ways that not only demonstrate the full range of his technical skills but also showcase his attention to nuance. He is unique in his ability to bring out the beauty in a fiddle tune while still making your feet tap uncontrollably. He also sings on one or two numbers. His book of dulcimer solos, listed in the What's New section, contains a lot of these hot licks and examines his approach to arranging tunes for the dulcimer.

Tull Glazener and Jim Sperry are back with a new collection of their concert favorites. **Plays Well With Others** features Tull's dulcimer and Jim's guitar with Guy George on pennywhistle, flute, steel drum, and saxophone. Demetrius Steinmetz adds acoustic bass. Tull's dulcimer playing is superb and Jim throws in more than a few hot guitar licks to augment his lead vocals. The tunes range from fiddle tunes—Nail that Catfish to a Tree and Dixie Hoedown; love songs—New Harmony and Call Me Stupid; pop—Mr. Sandman, Write Myself a Letter, Sentimental Journey; and even a limbo hit for you Kentucky Music Week veterans. All of it is well played and presented. Guy George's contributions on several tunes give those tunes a special flavor but, overall, this is basically an album that showcases a great duo at the top of their form.

Rick Thum's new release, **Front Porch Waltz,** will certainly set your fields on fire. Rick's an acknowledged virtuoso on the hot dulcimer jam scene. On this recording, he is joined by Ken Kolodner, David Schnaufer and Robin Bullock to produce another spectacular album of hammered dulcimer music. Noticeable in Rick's playing are his use of syncopation and his rare ability to achieve warp speed without a space ship. He adds a nice vocal in Suppertime along with some waltzes (including his own Front Porch Waltz), and a rollicking version of La Partita. When he mixes these with the hot dance numbers that he does so well, he produces a very tasty treat for hammered dulcimer enthusiasts.

Marcy Prochaska also has a new album that is certainly worth your shopping attention. Mary recently moved from Tidewater Virginia to New York State and **No Loose Threads** features her hammered dulcimer playing in a varied program of delightful waltzes, sprightly and stately originals, Celtic tunes, and songs of praise. Marcy sings and plays guitar, recorder, autoharp, and bowed psaltery in addition to hammered dulcimer and is joined by several talented musical friends on guitar, bodhran, whistle, dulcimer, and flute. A solid group of vocalists add their harmonies to Mary's lead. Mary's dulcimer playing is imaginative, solid and very tasteful. The music is altogether excellent and the eclectic mix of tunes includes some real keepers you may not have heard before. Selections include Rowena's Waltz/ Harper's Waltz, Variations on a Three-Year Old Theme, Let the People Praise, and Road to Lisdoonvarna/ South of the James.

Dulcimer Christmas • Michael Shull, 412 Ermine Road, W. Columbia, SC 29170, 803-796-2559, Michael@MichaelShull.com, www.michaelshull.com (CD)

Mode for Dulcimer • Stephen Siefert, 217 Chimney Top Dr, Antioch, TN 37013, 615-731-2481, stephen seifert@hotmail.com, www.stephen seifert.com (CD)

Plays Well with Others • Tull Glazener and Jim Sperry, Eagle Creek Music, 6936 W. 71st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46278, tull@falcon.regenstrief.org (CD)

Front Porch Waltz • Rick Thum, RTAudio, 6710 Twin River Rd, Eureka, MO, rthum@rthum.com, www.rthum.com (CD)

No Loose Threads • Marcy Prochaska, PO Box 43, Jacksonville NY 14854, marcyproch@cs.com, http://mp-dulcimer.tripod.com/ (CD)

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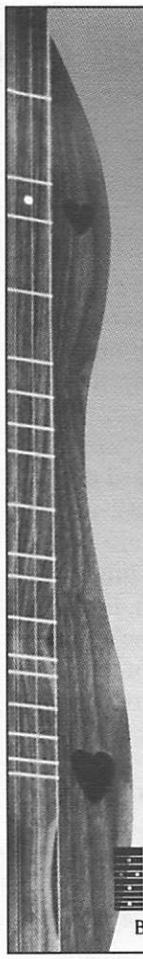

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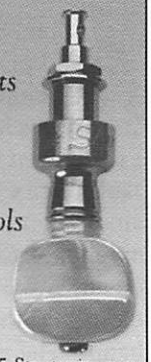

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Events

May 10 • Shelbyville, IN
Blue River Dulcimer Festival Concerts, Workshops. Info: Shelby Co. Historical Society, 52 W. Broadway, Shelbyville, IN, 46176, 317-392-4634, grover@lightbound.com

May 9–11 • Decatur, AL
Dulci-fest 2003. Point Mallard Campground. MD, HD, other acoustic instruments. Jamming, open stage. Info: Morgan County Dulcimer Association, Janet Henderson, 18 Oak Hill Drive, Somerville AL 35670, 256-353-4239, jhendersonal@msn.com.

May 16–17 • Florence, AL
Tennessee River Dulcimer Festival at Florence-Lauderdale Coliseum. Jamming, open stage, sales booths. Camping sites and motels available. Info: Dwayne Posey, 597 Co. Road 224, Florence AL 35634, 256-764-2427.

May 16–18 • Coshocton, OH
28th Annual Dulcimer Days at Historic Roscoe Village. MD, HD. Mid-Eastern Regional Dulcimer Championships workshops, jamming, exhibits, sales, concert. Info: Roscoe Village Foundation, 381 Hill St., Coshocton, OH 43812. 740-622-9310 or 800-877-1830. www.roscoevillage.com.

May 18 • Nashville TN
Dulcimer Day sponsored by the Grand Old Dulcimer Club. All day jamming and stage presentations in Two Rivers Park. Info: Glen Wilson, 8218 White Chapel Ct., Brentwood TN 37027, 615-373-4270.

May 18–24 • Brasstown, NC
Continuing Mountain Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724. www.folkschool.org.

EVENTS CALENDAR DEADLINES

November – January issue:
Events from the 2nd weekend of Nov. through the 2nd weekend of Feb.
Deadline: August 1st

February – April issue:
Events from 2nd weekend of Feb. through the 2nd weekend of May
Deadline: November 1st

May – July issue:
Events from 2nd weekend of May through Labor Day weekend
This is our largest yearly calendar
Deadline: February 1st

August – October issue:
Events from the 2nd weekend of Aug. through the 2nd weekend of Nov.
Deadline: May 1st

Continued on next page

10th Annual
Housatonic Dulcimer & Music Celebration
Septemeber 19-21, 2003

Performers

Ken Kolodner, David Marks, David Neiman, Doofus, Carrie Crompton, Lorraine and Bennett Hammond, John Marshall, Bernadette Wiemer, Stephen Seifert, Thomasina, Rob Brereton, Dallas Cline

check out our websit
wwww.robear.net

(860) 354-9142
HDC • PO Box 2024 • New Milford, CT 06776

Cook Forest Folk Gathering
September 12th-14th, 2003
In the beautiful Cook Forest and at Clarion University in Western PA

Workshops
- MD & HD
- Fiddle
- Percussion
- Guitar
- Whistle
- Voice
- Clog Dancing
- Harmonica
- Banjo

And More!

Back by Popular Demand
John McCutcheon

Also Appearing:
Paddy's Racket
Flapjack
Rick Thum
Simple Gifts
Doofus
Out of the Blue
Ann and Phil Case
Donna Missigman
Vici Gombaski
Doug Smoot

And More!

Information: Kris Stiglitz at 814-393-2227 or kstiglitz@clarion.edu
www.simplegiftsmusic.com/cookforest

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Come join us in historic Bardstown, Kentucky for a wonderful, fun-filled week of classes, fantastic jams, concerts and so very much more!

Kentucky Music Week
June 15 – 20

Classes offered this year include fretted dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, autoharp, tin whistle, harp, guitar, banjo, vocal classes including harmony singing, shape note or "sacred harp" singing, basketry, pottery and other crafts, clogging, contra and other old time dances, performance and jamming techniques and more! Over 80 class choices are offered as well as exciting evening activities. A separate "Kids' Camp" runs parallel with adult classes.

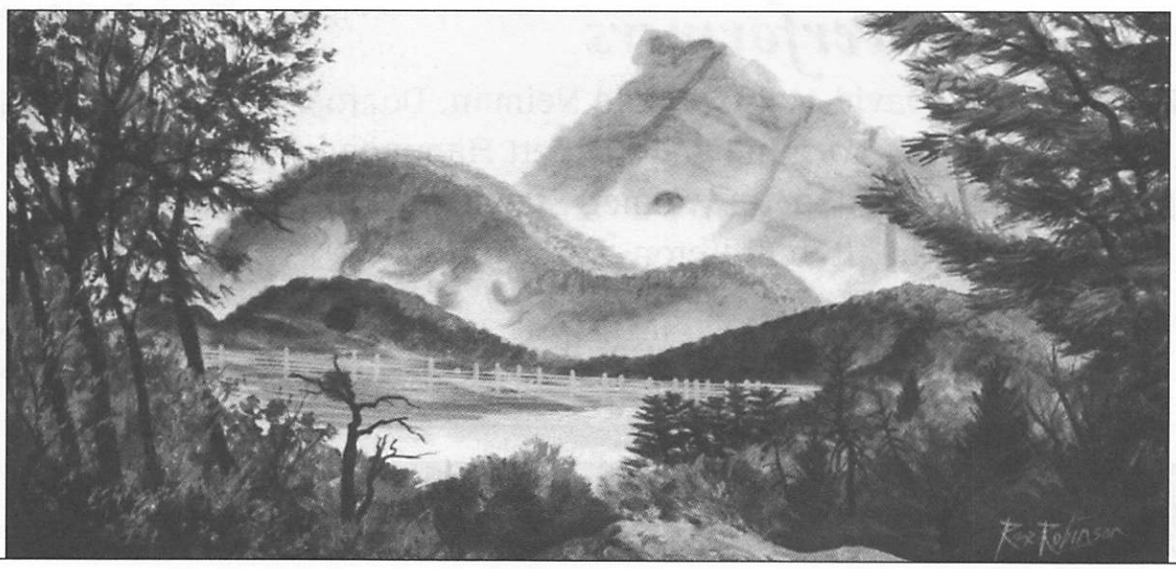
Instructors include: Stephen Seifert Susan Trump Bill Taylor Gary Gallier Lee Rowe Heidi Muller Maureen Sellers Lloyd Wright Michael LeCompte

Rick Thum Linda Thompson Cathy Barton Sam Rizzetta Karen Ashbrook Jim Miller Mollie Freibert

Les Gustafson-Zook Greg Jowaisas Dave Para & More!

Classes are held in an air-conditioned facility, mobility accessible, all on one floor with close-up parking. Our host hotel is the Days Inn (formerly Holiday Inn) 502-348-9253, and host campgrounds are again White's 502-348-9677 and Holt's Campground 502-348-6717.

For more information and/or a brochure you can visit our web site at www.texas.net/~square1/kmw or contact Nancy Barker at KMW, Inc., P. O. Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004, 502-348-5237 or email us at KYTreeFrog@aol.com.



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May 23–25 • Lisbon, OH
Dulci-More Festival. MD, HD. Concerts, workshops, mini-concerts, and more. Info: Bill Schilling, 984 Homewood Ave., Salem, OH 44460-3816. 330-332-4420. www.dulcimore.org.

May 23–25 • Yellow Springs, OH
Southern Ohio Dulcimer Festival at Antioch College. MD & HD (all levels), guitar, autoharp. Workshops and concerts. Info: Mel Derickson, River Song Music Shoppe, melbarb @bright.net, www.riversongmusic shoppe.com.

May 23–26 • East Troy, WI
Stringalong Weekend. Dulcimer concerts, workshops, singing, and dancing at YMCA Camp Edwards. Bring or rent an instrument. Info: UWM Folk Center, Ann Schmid, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. 800-636-FOLK (3655). www.uwm.edu/Dept/Folk/.

May 24–26 • near Athens GA
Chickenhouse Jam is simply that: camping and JAMming. All instruments (including dulcimers) are welcome. Info: Terry Lewis, 770-338-7469, www.geocities.com/stringsonfire/.

May 26–31 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Mountain Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724. www.folk school.org.

May 30–June 1 • Greensburg, PA
Chestnut Ridge Dulcimer Festival. MD, HD. Workshops and concert at the Univ. of Pittsburgh, Greensburg. Info: Don and Betty Brinker, 902 Hillview Ave., Latrobe, PA 15650. 724-539-7983, dwbrinker.pacol.net, www.chestnut ridgefest.com.

May 30–June 2 • Clarion, PA
Clarion Folk College, on the campus of Clarion University. MD, HD, other instruments. Workshops with focus on group playing. Jam sessions and concerts. Info: Kris Stiglitz, Clarion Un., Clarion PA 16214, 814-393-2227, Kstiglitz@clarion.edu.

May 31–June 1 • Japan
Minori Dulcimer & Autoharp Festival at Ueno Ranch. HD, MD, Autoharp. Japan's only outdoor festival. Info: Atsushi Iguchi, 3-51-1, H-101 Nokendai, Kanazawa-ku, Yokohama 236-0057 Japan, +81-45-771-8403, amtec@m2.pbc.ne.jp.

June 1–7 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Hammered Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724. www.folkschool.org.

June 6–7 • Owensboro, KY
Yellowbanks Dulcimer Festival at English Park. HD, MD. Workshops, concerts, crafts, food, and vendors. Info: Yellowbanks Dulcimer Society, Thelma Newman, 4113 Masonwoods Lane, Owensboro KY 42303, 270-684-1631, oboro69@bellsouth.net.

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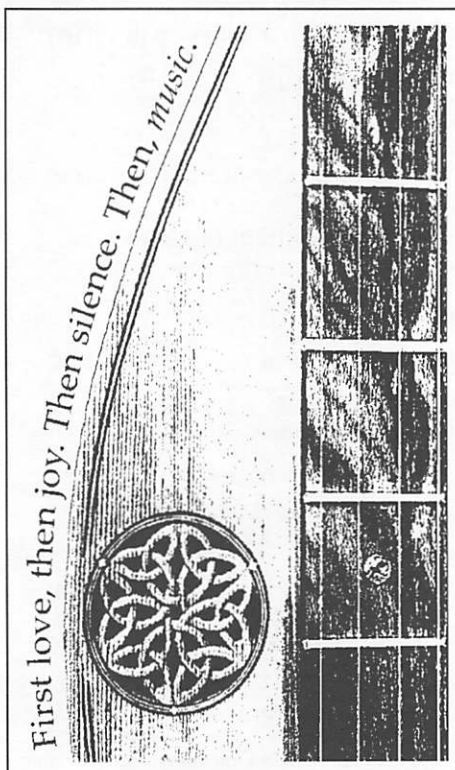

Our 22nd Year!

The 2003 Northeast Dulcimer Symposium

21-27 June, 2003
Blue Mountain Lake, New York
with

Maggie Sansone — *Hammered Dulcimer*
Karen Mueller — *Mountain Dulcimer*
Andrea Hoag — *Fiddle*
Mary McLaughlin — *Irish Singing/Voice*
Ken Lovelett — *Percussion*
David Moore — *Mountain Dulcimer*
Dwain Wilder — *Special Mountain Dulcimer Building Class*

Seven days of music and fun on the shores of the Adirondack Park's loveliest lake. An unforgettable week of small classes, private lessons, and tutorials all with lots of personal attention; concerts and jams; bird watching; hiking and canoeing; and incredible sunsets.

For information or to register write ***David Moore, P.O. Box 358, Annapolis Jct., MD 20701***
Email: ***info@nedulcimer.org*** *See the website:* ***http://www.nedulcimer.org***

Stringalong
Workshops

Nationally Known Dulcimer Artists

On a
Wisconsin Lake
1 hour from Milwaukee & Chicago

Stringalong Weekends
May 23–26, 2003
Nov. 7–9, 2003
March 5–7, 2004

UW-Milwaukee Folk Center

☎ 1 (800) 636-FOLK

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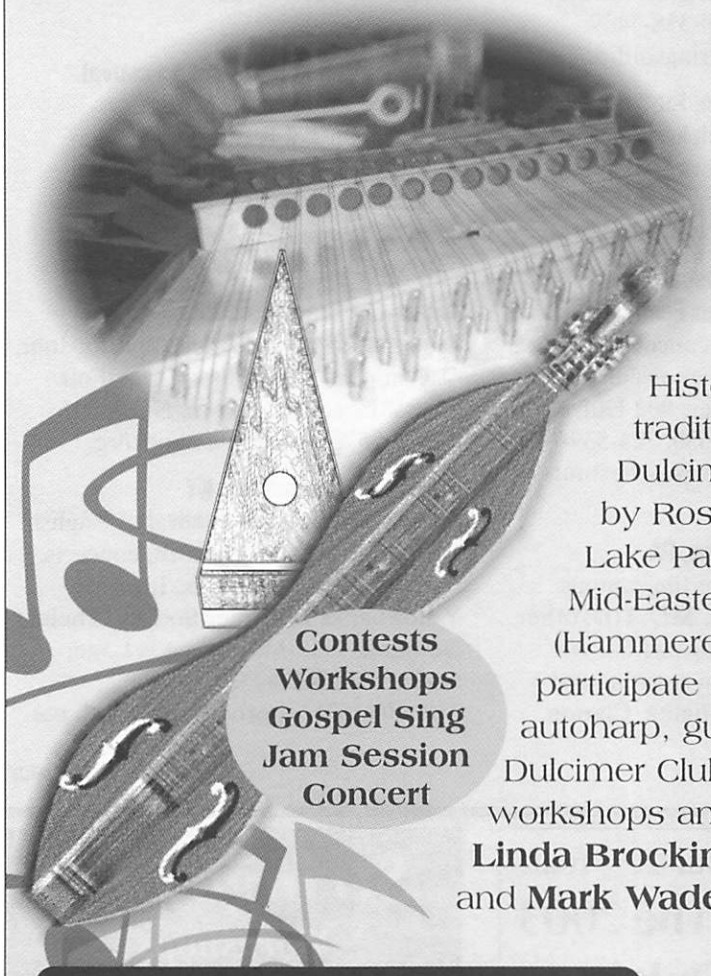
pickin' up GREAT vibrations at the



29th Annual
DULCIMER DAYS
May 16, 17 & 18

Contests
Workshops
Gospel Sing
Jam Session
Concert

Historic Roscoe Village salutes the sounds and traditions of dulcimer music at the 29th Annual Dulcimer Days festival and competition. Hosted by Roscoe Village and held at nearby Coshocton Lake Park Pavilion, this festival features the Mid-Eastern Regional Dulcimer Championships (Hammered & Mountain). Guests are invited to participate in hammered and mountain dulcimer, harp, autoharp, guitar and bowed psaltery workshops; a Dulcimer Club Concert; open, vocal and duet contests; workshops and a Sat. evening concert featuring **Linda Brockinton** (Alexander, AR) on mountain dulcimer and **Mark Wade** (Columbia, SC) on hammered dulcimer.

Historic
Roscoe Village
Coshocton, Ohio
Lodging • Shopping • Dining • Tours

Historic Roscoe Village is a lovingly restored 1800s Canal Town nestled in the beautiful Tuscarawas Valley in SE Ohio just off US 36 at Coshocton.

All performances & contests are held at the Pavilion at Lake Park. Events begin Fri. at 12 p.m. with scheduled workshops. Entertainment begins Fri. at 7 p.m. with Dulcimer Club Concert.

SATURDAY MAY 17 —

9 am	Workshops at Lake Park Pavilion
11:30 am-4 pm	Open Contest, Vocal Contest & Mountain Dulcimer Duet Contest
3:30 pm	Workshops at Lake Park Pavilion
7 pm	Concert featuring Mark Wade & Linda Brockinton
10 pm	Open Jam Session

SUNDAY MAY 18 —

9:45 am	Gospel Sing
10:45 am	Mid-Eastern Regional Mountain Dulcimer Championship
12:30 pm	Workshops at Lake Park Pavilion
3 pm	Mid-Eastern Regional Hammered Dulcimer Championship

For registration information call 800-877-1830

800•877•1830 www.roscoevillage.com

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June 6–8 • Elverson, PA
French Creek Dulcimer Retreat. Rustic cabin lodging, jams, workshops, concerts and dancing. Info: Greater Pinelands Dulcimer Society, Mary Carty, PO Box 292, Rancocas NJ 08073-9998, 856-231-8588. www.pinelandsfolk.com/gpds.

June 8–14 • Mars Hill, NC
Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week. MD. Classes, concerts, and jamming. Info: Mars Hill College, PO Box 6785, Mars Hill NC 28754. 828-689-1167, conferences@mhc.edu, www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic.

June 13–16, 17–20 • Colorado River, UT
Moons & Tunes. River running, desert strolling, camping—and music. Professional guides, boats, gourmet food provided. Info: Bonnie Carol, 15 Sherwood Rd., Nederland CO 80466, 303-258-7763. www.BonnieCarol.com.

June 13–15 • Montgomery, AL
Montgomery Dulcimer Players **5th Annual Jam & Campout** at Gunter-Hill Corps of Engineer Campground. Potluck supper, jamming, open stage. Info: Betty Reeves, 334-271-0671, Dulcimergran933@aol.com.

June 14 • Morgantown, WV
PattyFest. HD, MD, other instruments. Old-time music festival in honor of Patty Looman. Camp Muffly, south of Morgantown. Workshops, concerts, vendors. Jeff Fedan, Rt. 1 Box 111, Masontown WV 26542, 304-864-0105, rocks@westco.net.

June 15–20 • Bardstown, KY
Kentucky Music Week. Instruction in MD, HD, other instruments, basket making, and singing. Also see July 26th listing. Concerts. Info: Nancy Barker, Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004. 502-348-5237. www.texas.net/~square1/kmw.

June 20–22 • Calabasas, CA
Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance, & Storytelling Festival. MD, HD. Workshops singing, dancing, storytelling and concerts on campus of Soka University. Info: California Traditional Music Society, 4401 Trancas Place, Tarzana, CA 91356-5399. 818-817-7756. www.ctms-folkmusic.org.

June 20–22 • Byron, MI
Friends and Family Campout, sponsored by the Silver Strings Dulcimer Society. Jams, workshops, and crafts. Info: Barb Lakin, 248-426-8519, http://geocities.com/ssdsociety/special_files/myersflyer.html.

June 21 • Brethren, MI
Spirit of the Woods Folk Festival. Free. Performances, music, dance, children's activities, and crafts at Dickson Township Park. Camping nearby. Info: Spirit of the Woods Music Association, wkjoseph@kaltelnet.net, 11171 Kerry Rd., Brethren, MI 49619. 231-477-5381.

Continued on next page

Northern Lights
HAMMERED DULCIMER RETREAT
on the peaceful shores of
Lake Huron in Ontario, Canada
For intermediate and advanced players
July 20th-26th, 2003
Week-long workshop with master teacher Steve Schneider, including individual and group instruction.
A maximum of six students allows for a highly personalized experience. Exquisite setting in island cabin on tree-lined shore near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.
Students must be comfortable in open boats.
"Northern Lights is a beacon for some of us in the dark." — GB
"It will be very difficult to go anywhere else after this for a dulcimer workshop." — JA
Costs: $800-$900 includes meals, lodging & stargazing.
For more information, contact:
northernlights@steveschneider.com or at 1-888-DULCIMER

TWELFTH ANNUAL
AUGUST
DULCIMER
DAZE
AUGUST 22, 23, 24, 2003
WEST DOVER, VERMONT
* * *
JON KAY
MacARTHUR Family
MADDIE MacNEIL
PAM WEEKS
* * *
MOUNTAIN DULCIMER
WORKSHOPS & MORE
FOR INFORMATION
CALL OR WRITE
FOLK CRAFT MUSIC
P.O. BOX 88
JACKSONVILLE, VT 05342
802-368-7437
E-Mail: swewater@sover.net

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What 2002 participants said about Western Carolina University Mountain Dulcimer Week:
"The best value and most comprehensive program in the country." ... "I would walk the 500 miles to attend. Unforgettable experience - friendly people - beautiful music." ... "The people I met here couldn't have been any nicer." (age 16) ... "I had a blast." (age 15) ... "Unique opportunity for concentrated interaction with finest instructors and to form enduring friendships with other players." ... "Great in-depth training and interaction with other players." ... "The best way to make a big jump in skills!" ... "An extremely well-run event! Very organized. Smooth! The instructors were very accessible." ... "Enriching, friendly environment." ... "An experience all mountain dulcimer players need to have." ... "Not like any dulcimer event you've ever been to." ... "The 'Harvard' of mountain dulcimer events." ... "Great! Sign up early."

Join us

for
The 4th Annual

Western Carolina University
Mountain Dulcimer Week

Cullowhee, North Carolina
Sunday, June 22 - Friday, June 27, 2003

GREAT PERFORMER-INSTRUCTORS ALL WEEK LONG!

Robert Force	Janita Baker	Linda Brockinton	Neal Hellman
Don Pedi	Larry Conger	Rob Brereton	Anne Lough
Phyllis Gaskins	Kenneth Bloom	Lois Hornbostel	Ralph Lee Smith
Mike Anderson	Jeff Furman	Wayne Seymour	Jim Miller
Bill Taylor	Ben Seymour	Peggy Leehy	Jeff Sebens
Joe Shelton	Gary Sager	George Haggerty	John Stockard
and more...			

Nine Morning Playing Skills Courses (12 contact hours) • 72 Hours of Afternoon Workshops • Special Course with Janita Baker on "Musicianship and Arranging" (w/music principles, tab reading & writing) • Special Course with Kenneth Bloom on "Bowing the Mountain Dulcimer" • Special sessions on Appalachian Dulcimer traditions • Two Super Evening Faculty Concerts • Participants' Open Stage • Play in our Dulcimer Orchestra • Daytime and Evening Jam Sessions led by Staff • Dulcimer Marketplace • Get-Acquainted Barbecue Buffet • Scholarships for Youth & Dulcimer Teachers • Economical Tuition, Meals & On-Campus Housing • Free Shuttle Bus Service!

For your WCU Mountain Dulcimer Week Catalog & Registration form to be mailed in February contact: Continuing Education and Summer School, Western Carolina University, 138 Outreach Center, Cullowhee, NC 28723. Phone 828-227-7397. E-mail: hensley@wcu.edu or visit our web page at http://cess.wcu.edu/dulcimer for updates. For questions on curriculum and staffing, contact Lois Hornbostel, Mountain Dulcimer Week Director, P. O. Box 907, Bryson City, NC 28713 or Ldulc@gte.net

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June 21–27 • Blue Mt. Lake, NY
Northeast Dulcimer Symposium XXI. MD, HD, fiddle classes. Singing, percussion workshops,concerts, jams, and dulcimer building workshop. Info: David Moore, PO Box 358, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. info@nedulcimer.org, http://nedulcimer.org.

June 21–22 • Waynesville, OH
Old Tyme Music Festival at Caesar's Creek Pioneer Village. MD. Concerts, open stage, workshops, banjo, guitar, fiddle, harmonica, spoons, and more. Info: John Noftsger, PO Box 224, Spring Valley, OH 45370. 937-862-5551, jnoftsger@edldayton.com.

June 21–22 • Coshocton, OH
Annual Olde Time Music Festival at Historic Roscoe Village. MD, HD. Workshops, jamming, exhibits, sales, concert. Info: Roscoe Village Foundation, 381 Hill St., Coshocton, OH 43812. 740-622-9310 or 800-877-1830. www.roscoevillage.com.

June 22–27 • Cullowhee, NC
Mountain Dulcimer Week at Western Carolina University. Courses for all levels. Repertoire classes, concerts, open stage, marketplace. Info: Continuing Ed & Summer School, WCU Outreach Center, Cullowhee NC 28723. 828-277-7397. http://cess.wcu.edu/dulcimer.

June 27–29 • Altamont, NY
Old Songs Festival of Traditional Music and Dance. Altamont Fairgrounds. Concerts, dancing, workshops, family activities (MD, HD). Info: Old Songs, Inc., P.O. Box 399, Guilderland, NY 12084. 518-765-2815. www.oldsongs.org.

July 27–29 • Cork, Ireland
Cork Dulcimer Festival. Workshops, open mike, concerts, and more. Info: Christie Burns, +353(0)879039564, cburns@ucla.edu. www.corkdulcimer fest.org

June 27–29 • Farmington, PA
Laurel Highlands Dulcimer Workshop. HD workshops, Sunday morning service and open mike concert at Benners Meadow Run Campground. Info: Brett Ridgeway, 704-329-4097, fbridgeway@juno.com.

June 28 • Corydon, IN
Old Capitol Traditional Music Festival. Workshops, open stage, concerts, jamming. Info: Nancy Meisner, 3605 Lagle Lane, Depauw IN 47115, 812-347-2447.

June 29–July 11 • Westminster, MD
Common Ground on the Hill. Includes HD, MD. Two week-long sessions of instruction, singing, songwriting, dance, percussion, and more. Info: Common Ground on the Hill, WMC, Western MD College, Westminster, MD 21157. 410-857-2771. www.commonground onthehill.com.

July 5–6 • Grand Rapids, OH
Black Swamp Old-Time Music Festival. HD, MD, fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, bass. Workshops, concerts, jams, crafts. Info: Brickstreet Community Arts, 419-287-0011, brickst@wcnet.org.

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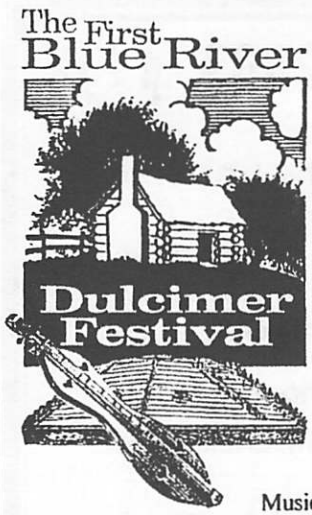

Blue River Dulcimer Festival
May 10, 2003
Shelby County Fairgrounds
Shelbyville, Indiana

Featuring

Stephen Siefert
Kentucky Standard
Maureen Sellers
Cathy Barton & Dave Para
Tom & Missy Strothers
Molly Freibert
Pitts' Kitchen Dulcimer Band

Musical Instruments and Supply Vendors Welcome

Info: **Shelby Co. Historical Society**
52 W. Broadway Shelbyville, Indiana 46176
317-392-4634 email: grover@lightbound.com

Concerts, Workshops * Inside and Outdoors * Food Available

This is an outside event - Bring Sweaters and Lawn Chairs

10:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Come Help Us Celebrate Our First Dulcimer Festival
www.blueriverdulcimerfestival.com

MEADOWLARK MUSIC CAMP for adults Aug. 24-30, 2003

Celtic, old-time, and folk music in a beautiful lake-side setting.

INSTRUCTORS:
Ken Kolodner (Hamm. Dulcimer)
Anne Dodson (Mt. Dulcimer)
Lorinda Jones (Mt. Dulcimer)
plus instruction in fiddle, banjo, guitar, harp, voice, and more!

For information, contact:
Jerry Bryant (413) 256-6606
25 Columbia Dr., Amherst, MA 01002
www.meadowlarkmusiccamp.com

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Common Ground on the Hill 2003

9th Annual "Traditions Weeks"

June 29th-July 4th and July 6th-11th,

At picturesque McDaniel College, just minutes from Baltimore and Washington, DC, with over 100 acclaimed traditional musicians, singers, artists, dancers and writers offering classes, workshops & exciting performances while exploring cultural diversity in search of "common ground."

American Music & Arts Festival

July 12th-13th at Carroll County Farm Museum

Featuring five stages of traditional roots music & dance, juried art & crafts, family "World Village," and delicious multi-cultural foods!

Hammered Dulcimer: *Bill Spence, Walt Michael, Jeanean Martin, Ken Kolodner, Bill Troxler*

Mountain Dulcimer: *Mark Nelson, Sally Rogers, Jon Kay*

Plus instruction in: *guitar, authoharp, banjo, mandolin, bass, fiddle, harmonica, celtic harp, Native flute, highland pipes, singing, songwriting, bodhran, gospel choir, African dance, contradance and a broad offering of fine arts and crafts.*

For information and a catalog contact:

Common Ground on the Hill
2 College Hill, McDaniel College
Westminster, MD 21157

410-857-2771 cground@qis.net
www.commongroundonthehill.org

Common Ground

Sweetwater presents the 7th annual

SHADY GROVE

Appalachian Dulcimer Camp

...a week-long music camp for adults

For info: www.sweetwaterfolk.com
Email:
shadygrove@sweetwaterfolk.com
Phone: 937-473-5176

July 6-11 2003

Urbana, Ohio at Urbana University

Shady Grove Tag Teams!
One week of instruction at your level, with two great teachers!

Intermediate/Advanced:
Shelley Stevens & Tull Glazener

Intermediate:
Maureen Sellers & Louise Ziegler

Beginner/Novice:
Shari Wolf & Cindy Funk

NEW! Dulcimer building workshop with:
Art Burmeister

Brought to you by your friends, Sweetwater
(Shari Wolf, Shelley Stevens, Cindy Funk)

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July 6–Aug. 10 • Elkins, WV
Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops. MD, HD. Five weeks of classes, concerts, dances, and more. Info: Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241. 304-637-1209. www.augusta heritage.com.

July 6–Aug 2 • Swannanoa, NC
The Swannanoa Gathering. HD, MD. Week-long workshops in the folk arts. Dulcimer Week 7/14–20. Info: The Swannanoa Gathering, Warren Wilson College, PO Box 9000, Asheville, NC 28815. 828-298-3434 or 828-771-3761. www.swangathering.org.

July 6–11 • Springfield, OH
Shady Grove Appalachian Dulcimer Camp at Wittenberg University. MD instruction (all levels), concerts, jamming. Info: Sweetwater, PO Box 164, Covington, OH 45318. 937-473-5176. shadygrove@sweetwaterfolk.com, www.sweetwaterfolk.com.

July 9–12 • Quaker City, OH
22nd Annual Dulcimer/Autoharp Competition. MD featured, HD encouraged. Ohio Hills Folk Festival; a small town competition with a big heart. Info: 740-965-5102.

July 10–12 • Carthage, MO
Summerfest 2003. MD, HD, other acoustic instruments. Pre-festival workshops, concerts, jam sessions, crafts. Info: Elaine Smith, 417-624-3580, dulcifer@juno.com, www.summer festmo.org.

July 12–13 • Morris, IL
Gebhard Woods Dulcimer Festival. MD, HD. Workshops, concerts, jamming, dancing, children's activities. Info: Diane Ippel, PO Box 801, Morris IL 60450, 708-331-6875. www.gwdf.org.

July 12–13 • Westminster, MD
Common Ground American Music & Arts Festival. Music, singing, drumming, dance, multi-cultural foods and more. Info: Common Ground on the Hill, WMC, Westminster, MD 21157. 410-857-2771. www.commonground onthehill.com.

July 13–19 • Brasstown, NC
Building and Playing a Mountain Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724. www.folkschool.org.

July 17–20 • Evart, MI
Dulcimer Funfest at the Osceola County Fairgrounds. Mainly HD, some MD. Concerts, workshops, open stage, jamming, and sales booths. Camping available. Info: Donna Beckwith, 817 Innes NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. 616-459-6716.

July 20–25 • Kansas City, MO
Heritage Dulcimer Camp, a week of study in MD and HD (all levels). Jam sessions, workshops, open stage, concerts. Info: Sharon Lindenmeyer, 785-472-4285, slndmlyr@informatics. net, www .personal.ksu.edu/~3014tum/heritage.

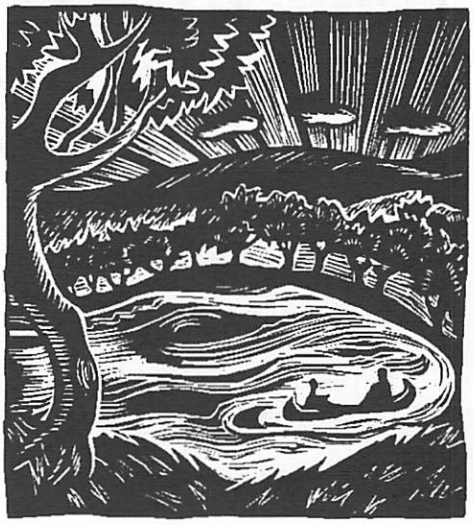
Continued on next page

Dulcimer Chautauqua on the Wabash

Reservations Limited! Reserve early!

October 17-19,2003
New Harmony, Indiana
Near Evansville in Beautiful Southern Indiana Just South of I-64

All Levels of Appalachian Dulcimer Instruction and More!
Featuring
Gary Gallier -Tull Glazener- Rob Brerton- Dan Evans—Lee Rowe
Maureen Sellers- Kentucky Standard Band- Janne Henshaw
Molly Freibert –June Goforth –Sally Papich
Sarah Elisabeth- Joseph Dean- The Lotus Dickey Story- Stephen Dickey - My Music, My Story- Sam Stone-Jim Sperry
Maria Abell-Crecelius and Dave Crecelius- Thursday Evening Pot Luck Supper -NEW!!! Friday afternoon workshops!!!
Bonus Beginner Workshop on Thursday Evening - Sandy Huebel - Sound- Dan Hamilton-Hymn Sing- Don Allen
Jam/Hospitality Barn with Barbara and Randy Snepp, Vicki & Tom Stuckert- Also- Pat Moss, Rich Harrison,



Friday & Saturday Night Concert!

Several ticket prices available- Participant(All events)-Jamming & Concert, Lecture Seminars Only- Concert Only
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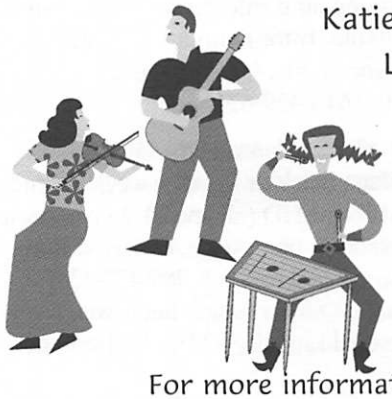

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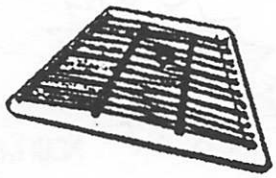

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July 25–27 • Louisville, KY
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August 1–3 • Ferrisburg, VT
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August 2 • Santa Cruz, CA
Redwood Dulcimer Day. MD workshops. Info: Janet Herman, 205 Jackson St., Santa Cruz CA 95060, 831-429-1691, fasola@cruzio.com, www.folkplanet.com.

August 3 • Lake Zurich, IL
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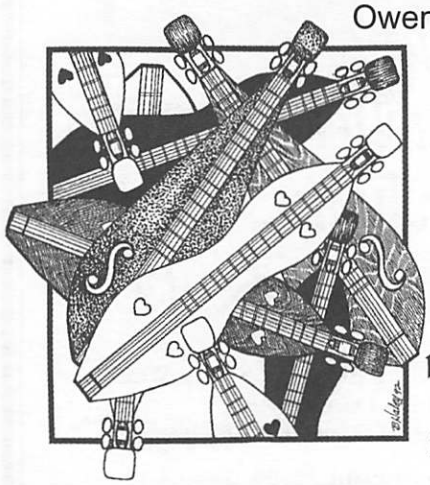

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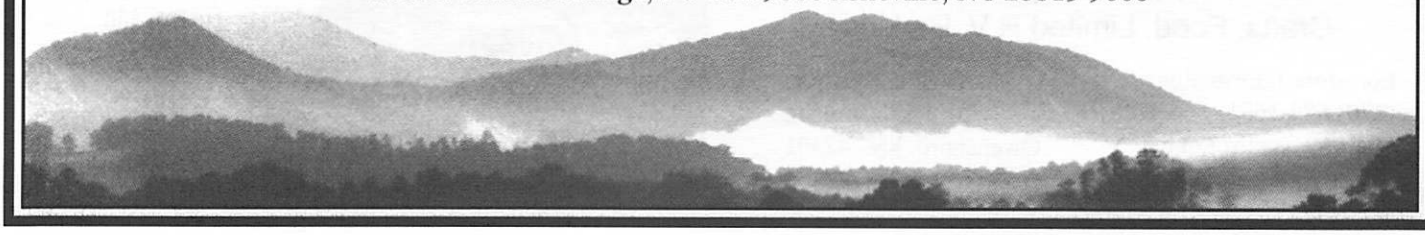

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Chatter Creek Hammered Dulcimer Festival at Chatter Creek Camp-ground. HD. Workshops. Info: Mary Anne Ogle, 425-788-5335, ogle@ u.washington.edu.

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Great River Road Festival. MD, HD. Concerts, workshops. State contests for MD, HD, open stage, vendors. Info: Johanna Nicholas, 314-863-8807. www.angelfire.com/il/gateway.

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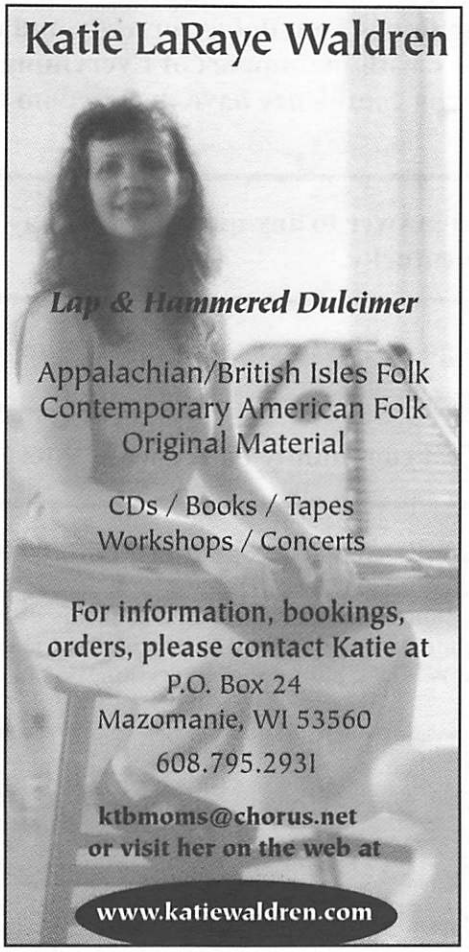

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Rakes of Mallow

A Teaching Article for the Hammered Dulcimer

by Anne Lough

This lively Irish tune is a fun and easy piece to play. I have used this tune many times in my classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School to introduce musical concepts as well as dulcimer applications and techniques. This piece will be helpful for you in approaching any new song you want to learn.

As we all have discovered, looking at sheet music while trying to play the hammered dulcimer is very difficult and the more we can rely on our ear and memory the quicker we will be playing well. So first of all, let's look at how melodies move. Basically we have melodies that move in a scale pattern (step by step) or by skips and chordal patterns. Recognizing these patterns in the music, where they repeat, and where they are in relationship to a marked course will not only make memorizing a whole lot easier, but will really aid in "fine tuning" your ear.

In the first full measure of Rakes of Mallow, we see a pattern that starts on the 1st note of the scale (G) and skips up a third (skips one course on the dulcimer). This is repeated two more times, followed by a descending scale pattern beginning on the 4th note of the scale (C) straight down to the note below the marked course (F#) . We then have the same skipping third pattern, played three times, as we had at the beginning, only starting one course lower, followed by a descending scale pattern beginning on the 5th note of the scale (D) back down to the first note. I would suggest you play this D on the left side of the treble bridge, to help reinforce horizontal patterns that will really be helpful when you start adding chords.

The next measure is identical to the first full measure and in measure six, by playing the G, B and D, you are outlining a G chord. For now, omit the notes in that measure with the stems going down, as they are fill notes and we'll add them later. To end the A section, you have another descending scale pattern starting on the C, down to the F# again, but coming up, over, around and ending on the G at the beginning of measure 8. This ending then has a "tag" of reaching over to the 5th note (D) on bass bridge (the note above the marked course) with your right hammer and then playing the G again before going back into the repeat of the A section. You'll notice the suggestion of starting the descending pattern with your left hand hammer. If you do this and continue to use a strict alternating left/right pattern, it will set you up for that reach to the bass bridge with your right hammer.

After repeating the A section, you will play the second ending which leads you into the B section. I would suggest again that you play the last note of the second ending (D) on the left side of the treble bridge with your left hand hammer, as you will want to start the descending scale pattern starting on the high G with your right hammer. This will make the crossing of the bridge smoother. You'll notice that this descending scale takes you across the bridge all the way down to the 3rd note of the scale (B) at which point it turns and goes back up to the 5th note (D) again which is played twice.The second time the D is played you can add the B as a harmony note. Then the same descending scale starting on the high G is played again to the same point, the B, but then does a skipping pattern to the D across the bridge. I have added the third below the B (G) as a harmony note and notice that these are the same thirds you played in the beginning pattern of the A section. When combined with the D, notice they form a little triangle that makes up a G chord. After playing the D on the left side of the bridge, you will drop down and play the notes on either side of the marked course (A and F#) which are the same set of thirds you played in the 3rd measure of the A section, followed by the D again. This triangle makes up a D chord.The next two measures (14 and 15) are almost identical to the first two measures of the B section, except you hold the

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D for two counts. (We'll add the fill in a minute). From measure 15 on the ending is almost exactly like the ending of the A section, with a little bit of melodic and rhythmic variation to make it interesting. Measure 16 and measure 7 are identical except for the very last note. In measure 16 you will go up to the C (marked course) instead of down to the F# and follow by playing the thirds B and G once more as eighth notes. The last two notes are the root note G with an added harmony of the low B on the base bridge (below the marked course) on the last G. These variations of a simple ending in both the A and B section are typical ways to dress up and add interest to any "sterile" endings you may come across.

To recap, in "Rakes of Mallow," we have seen that the melody is basically made up of skips of a third and straight descending scale patterns, with a little variation and quite a bit of repetition. You'll start to recognize these and other types of patterns in other tunes, enabling you to get them into your hammers and onto your dulcimer a whole lot quicker! After you have the melody and rhythm lined out on your dulcimer, you can add the fill notes in measures 6 and 15. These fill notes are a G arpeggio (notice the triangle formed again) beginning on the low D played on the bass bridge followed by the G and B on the right side of the treble bridge taking you right into the descending scale starting on the C. As you become more familiar with the chord triangles, they are great to use for fill any time you have some held notes.

One final note on rhythm and playing style. There are a lot of groups of eighth notes in this tune and your "trained" rhythmic sense would tell you to play them very evenly. However, in the authentic tradition of these dance tunes, it's important to create some rhythmic interest by playing these with a lilt. Give the first eighth note of every set of two a little more time than the second—not as much as in a dotted rhythm, but giving the feeling of a loping rhythm. We can also create some syncopation by accenting the 4th beat in measure 11 and the 2nd and 4th beats in measure 13. Have fun!

Anne Lough
691 Ferguson Cove Loop, Clyde, NC 28721
annelough1@cs.com

Anne Lough is a nationally known traditional musician with over thirty-five years experience in performance and teaching. Anne holds a Music Education degree from Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky and a Master of Music Education degree from Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina. She now devotes her full time to festivals, workshops, performances and school residencies.

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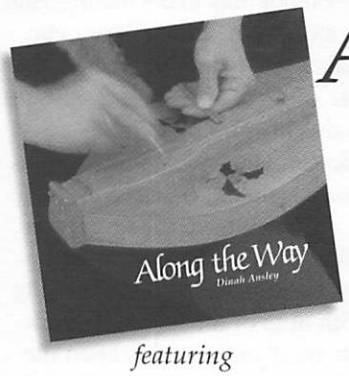

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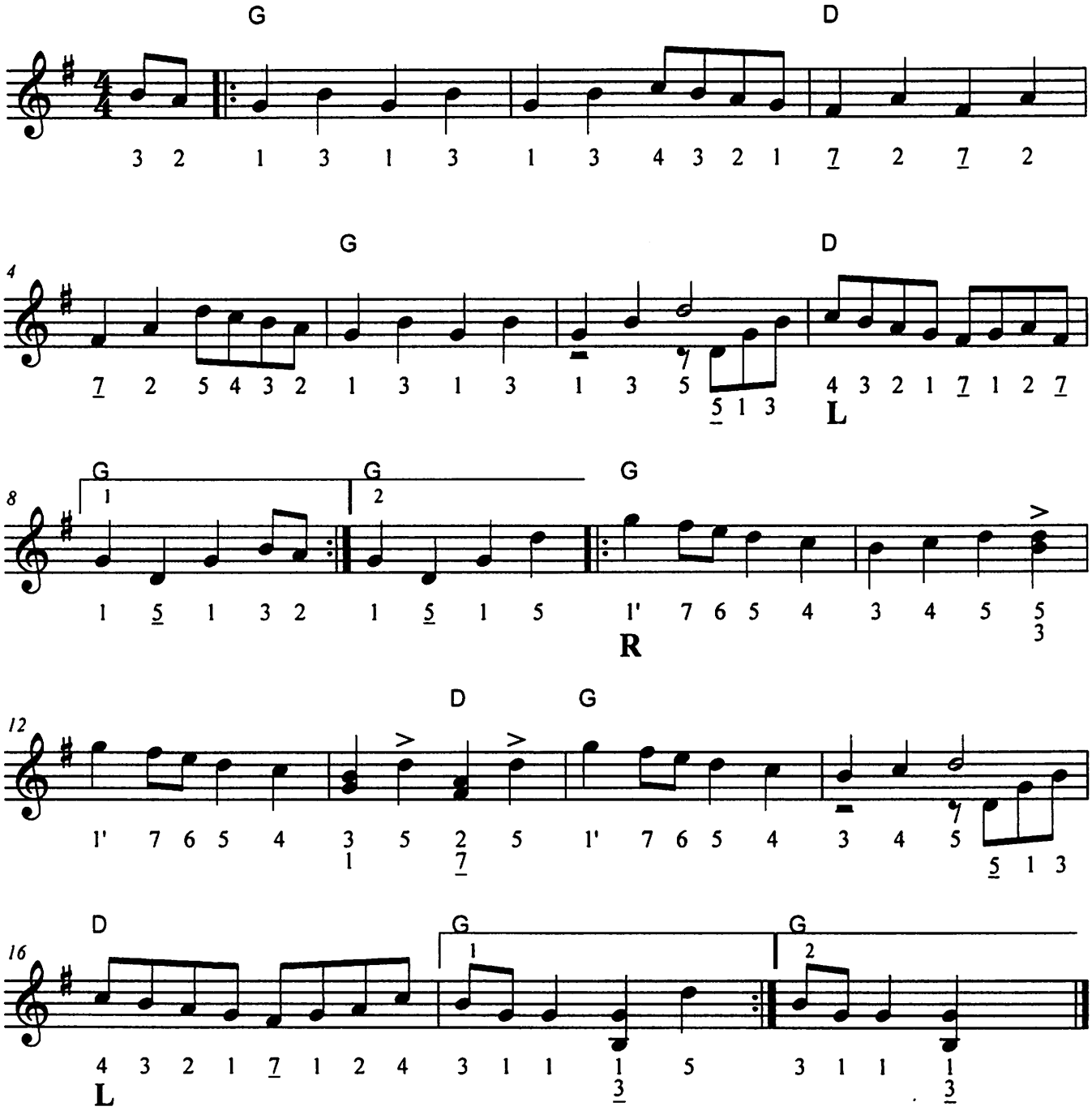
Rakes of Mallow

Irish

Arr. by Anne Lough



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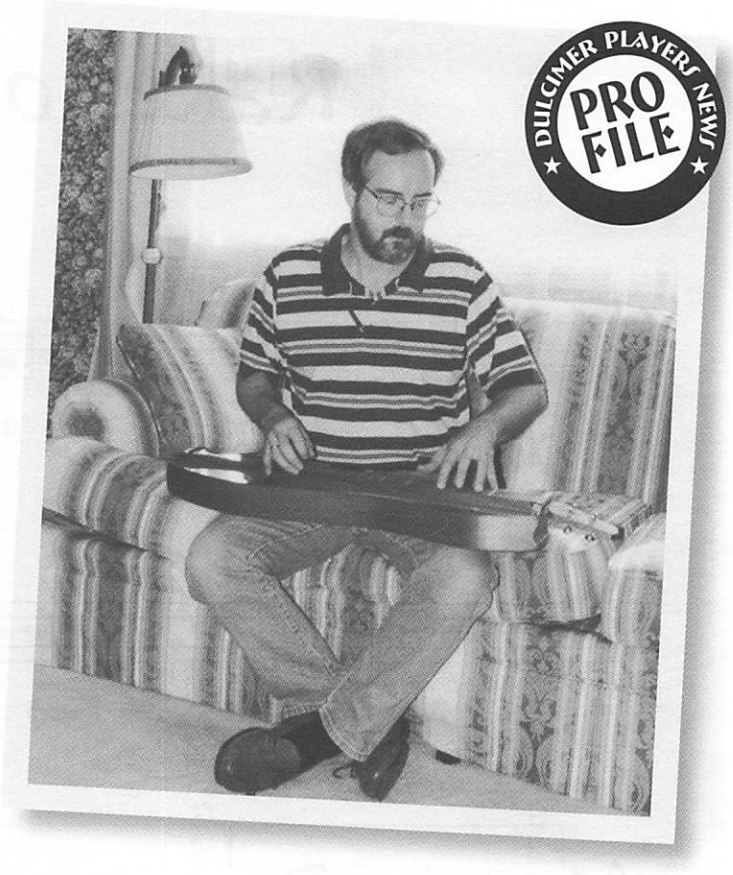
Bill Collins



One Christmas about twelve years ago, my mother gave me a Sunhearth teardrop as a present. I was bit mystified by the gift: I knew what a dulcimer was, but had never asked for one. I'd been playing guitar for about twenty-five years at that point and had been on binges of tenor banjo, hammered dulcimer, and recorder at various times. I'd never had any interest in an Appalachian dulcimer, so I wasn't sure what to do with it at first. Luckily, there was a dulcimer club nearby. My mom put me in touch with Earl Roth, long-time member of the Brandywine Dulcimer Fellowship, and I started attending meetings. (Incidentally, the BDF has been going strong for over 20 years, and we've been privileged to host workshops and concerts by Margaret MacArthur, Tull Glazener, Maddie MacNeil, Kevin Roth, Neal Walters and Doofus, and Ralph Lee Smith.)

After learning how to tune the thing and getting some basic instruction, I quickly got hooked on the gentle beauty

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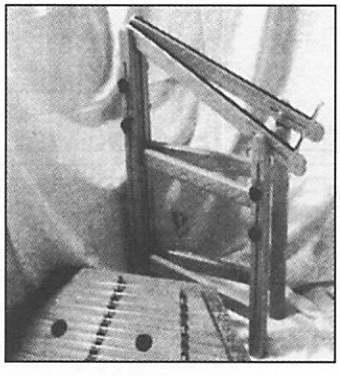

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of the dulcimer and the challenge of finding notes and chords on a diatonic instrument. Then I started attending festivals, taking workshops, and buying loads of recordings and tab books. Being obsessive helped: I'm quite happy practicing until my fingers are sore. There's never enough time to play as much as I want.

Most of my playing is for myself. I've performed at weddings, receptions, in museums, at retirement communities, and on open stages, but it's nerve-wracking. I prefer to share my musical ideas through teaching and arranging. In recent years, I've taught workshops at the Cranberry, Cook Forest, French Creek, and Albany festivals. I give private lessons and have produced two books of tab arrangements.

David Schnaufer, Jerry Rockwell, and Janita Baker have been big influences on my playing style, and I've been fortunate to have had the chance to study with these fine teachers at various week-long workshops. I also find the playing of Larkin Bryant Cohen a real inspiration. But many non-dulcimer musicians have influenced my playing as well. I think it's important for dulcimer players, as they develop a personal style, to listen to many musical genres and learn from the musical ideas of other instrumentalists, not just dulcimer players. For example, I think my dulcimer playing has improved a great deal from listening to what El McMeen does on guitar. Yes, when I grow up, I want to play dulcimer the way David Schnaufer plays dulcimer, but I also want to play dulcimer the way Barbara Cook sings, and the way Martin Hayes fiddles, and the way Marian McPartland plays piano.

I'm often asked how many dulcimers I own. Everyone's heard the joke, "How many dulcimers does a dulcimer player need?" Answer: "Just one more." That's me. My collection runs the gamut of voices, from a Ron Ewing dulcimette to a Blue Lion bass. In between are instruments by McSpadden, Bill Taylor, some treasured Jerry Rockwell dulcimers, and one of the last Galax-style instruments ever built by Jacob Ray Melton. The newest arrival is another very traditional instrument: an exquisite Jean Ritchie model from Blue Lion.

One justification for multiple instruments is the different registers available nowadays. Another excuse is the inconvenience of altering a single instrument every time you want to go from a 3- to 4-equidistant string setup, or tune from D A D to D A A, or raise the middle string for bowing. But I've also found that certain melodies just sound best on one particular instrument. There's so much variety in the styles and woods used by dulcimer builders that the tone, volume, and sustain of the instruments differ greatly. This gives players a lot to choose from when selecting the most appropriate voice for any particular piece of music.

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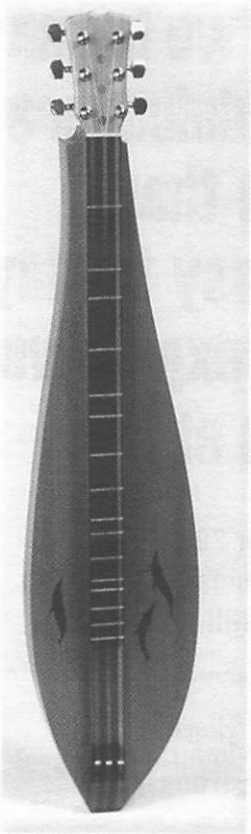

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Our updated Clubs List will be part of the Dulcimer Players News website by the time you read this notice (we hope, we hope). Please check to see if we're missing anyone, and if we are, please send us contact information.

Some folks didn't get back to us when we asked about their clubs, so we deleted the listing. But if you're there we want to know about you, as do the rest of our readers.

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A few of my instruments have the 1½ fret, and some of my arrangements require it. On the other hand, for many pieces, the 1½ fret is more of a nuisance than a benefit. Of course, the diatonic nature of the dulcimer can make it difficult to play certain pieces, but I find that part of the instrument's charm. If there's a piece I really want to arrange for dulcimer, I like puzzling out a workable way to play it. The challenge presented by the "missing" notes is something I wouldn't want to lose.

The dulcimer has such a lovely voice, it shouldn't be limited to any particular repertoire. As a teacher, I urge other players to try lots of different types of music and see what they sound like on this instrument. Explore a wide range of playing styles so you can evolve your own musical voice; but at the same time, learn as much as you can about the history of the dulcimer and its musical traditions. Finally, I always tell my students to focus on the dulcet aspect of the dulcimer: fast is good, but slow is often much, much better!

Bill Collins has two books of dulcimer arrangements: *Carolan's Dulcimer,* containing twenty-one lesser-known compositions by Turlough O'Carolan; and *Come Life, Shaker Life,* a collection of fifty Shaker tunes. Bill can be reached at dulcibill@aol.com or at 114 N. Hunter Forge Road, Newark, DE 19713.

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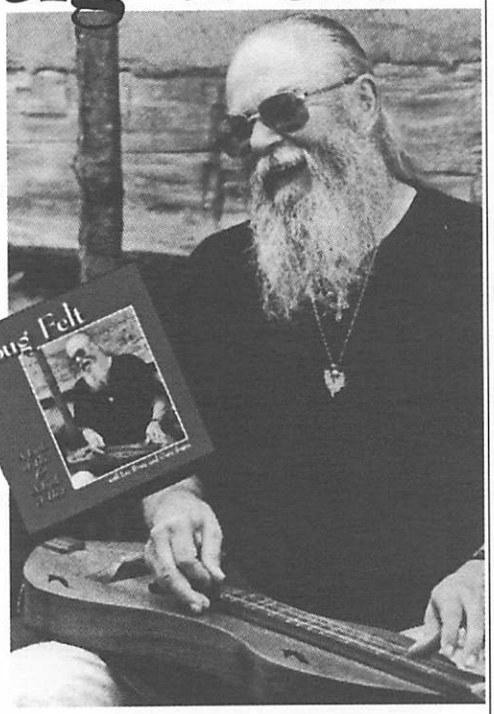

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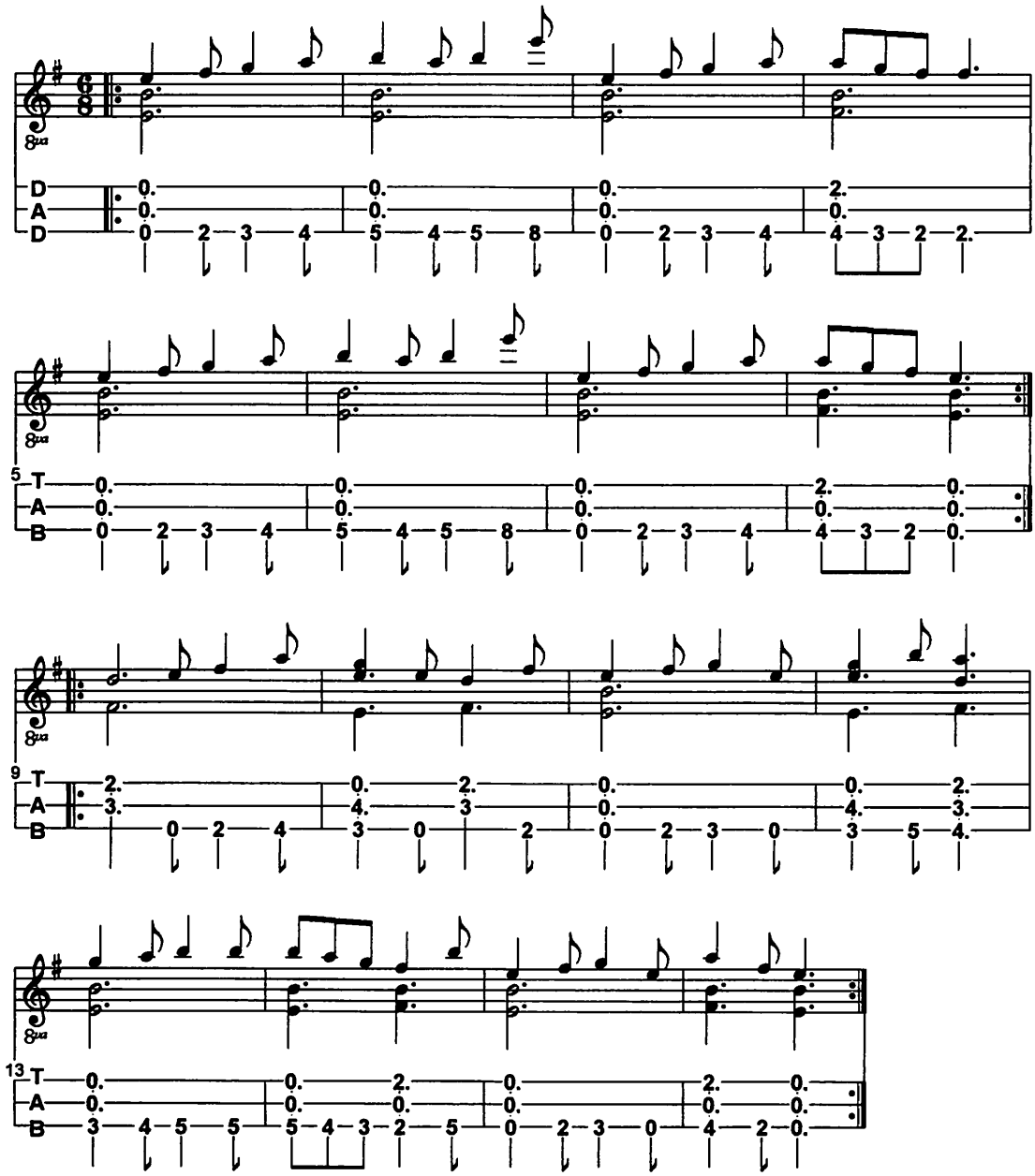
How My Soul Is Now Delighted

Dulcimer Arrangement
copyright 2001 by William L. Collins

Tuning: DAD, capo 1



This Shaker tune comes from the Mount Lebanon community in New York, and was received by an unknown Shaker sometime in the 1830's. This compelling melody sounds particularly good when fingerpicked. Play at a moderate tempo, but keep a driving pulse throughout.

Verses:

How my soul is now delighted
With the food of Zion's hill,
To the feast we are invited
Faithful souls may have their fill.

Cleans'd from every vile pollution
See the virgin happy throng;
Singing praise with heavenly motion,
None but such can learn the song.

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An Interv

Jim T
An Appalac

by Joe Holbert
Black Mountain NC

Throughout the generations many musicians and instrument builders have come from the mountains of western North Carolina. One such mountain musician and hammered dulcimer builder is Jim Taylor of Madison County. His numerous recordings reveal his expertise on traditional Civil War melodies and Celtic tunes as well as creative original music. He is well known for building superb hammered dulcimers and is a member of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Jim has taught hammered dulcimer playing at the Augusta Heritage Center and the Swannanoa Gathering.

How about telling me something about your musical background?

I've been playing music ever since I was ten years old. My grandparents were local musicians playing old-time and ragtime music. My grandfather, in fact, was a shape note music leader in western North Carolina. I suppose music has always been in my blood.

When did the hammered dulcimer enter your life?

In 1980 I first heard Jerry Reed Smith's recording, *Strayaway Child,* which began my love affair with the hammered dulcimer. At the time, I was in graduate school in Fort Worth, Texas, where I met hammered dulcimer maker Russell Cook. After hearing Russell play, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I hung out at Russell's shop for a year and built my first hammered dulcimer from a kit. Before I came back to North Carolina in 1982, Russell had taught me how to build hammered dulcimers and play some tunes. By 1984 I had developed my own design and was making hammered dulcimers full time. A couple of years later, I won the Southern Regional Hammered Dulcimer Contest at Mountain View, Arkansas. In 1989 I recorded my first CD, *Come Before Winter.*

How would you describe your style of music?

I just really love old-time and Celtic music. The whole thing for me is that connection with the past. It's part of the historian in me. Traditional music was not written for the consumer but was passed down in order to have fun. This music is very unpretentious. Those who played it in the past were not trying to prove anything. They didn't try to market or put their name on the music. There was the lack of self importance and self promotion. That's what I like about it the most: the music is for fun—just a way to express yourself.

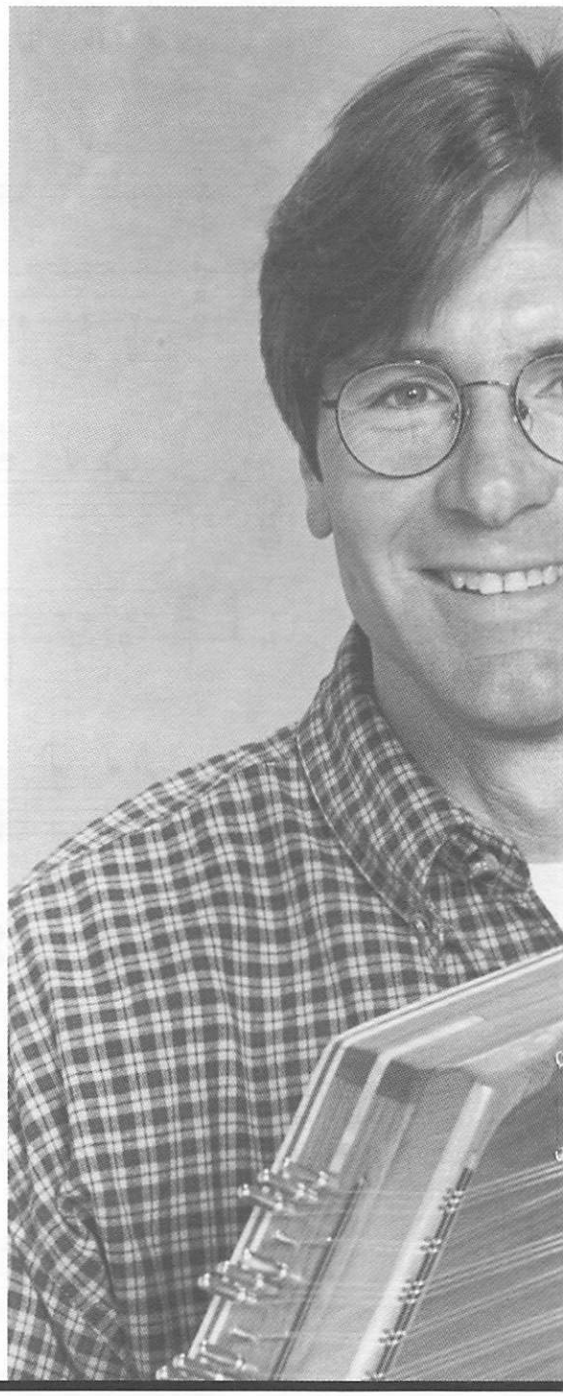
"The whole thing for me is that connection with the past."

What about your original music?

It just comes to me. I have three ninety-minute cassettes full of original pieces at home.

I know that you have a graduate degree in history and your liner notes in some of your CDs are like a miniature thesis. Would you elaborate more on your "connection with the past?"

History is simply the lives of people just like you and me. People 150 years ago lived, learned, struggled, had some good times, and died just as people do today. Sometimes in human history, unique events occur like what happened in this country 140 years ago with the Civil War. The passions and the emotions from this unique event fascinate



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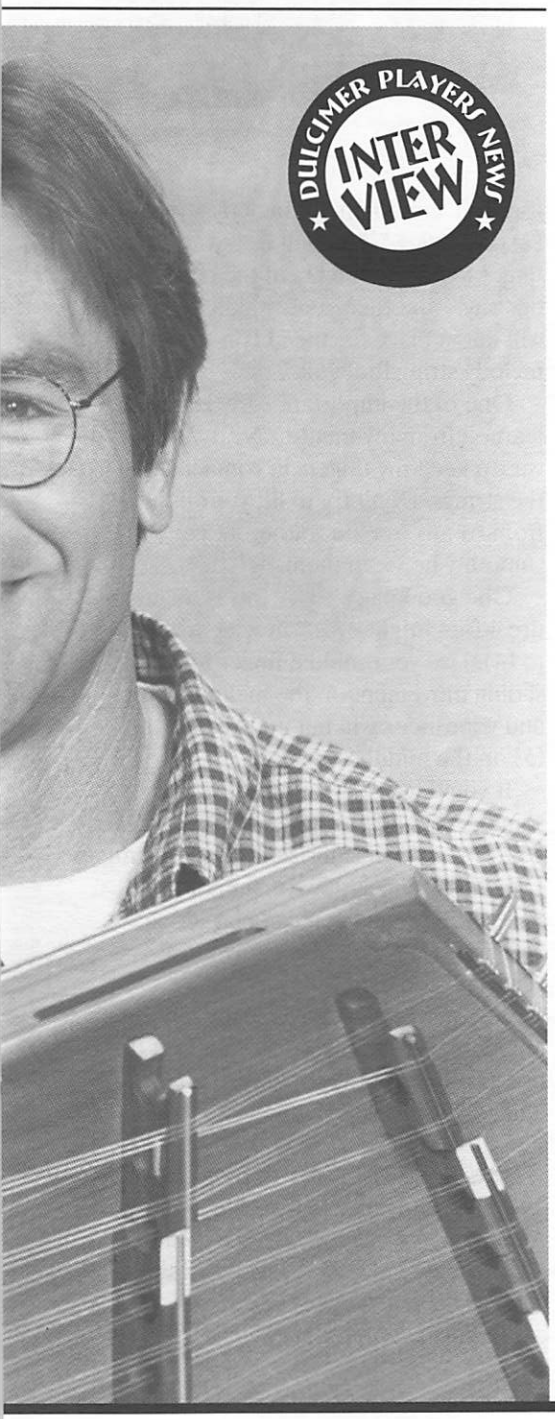

me. Questions come to my mind like: how did the war affect people in their everyday lives like the farmer, the miller, or the guy who worked in the factory up north? Why did they feel so strongly about what they were doing? The war affected all of us in some way, especially those of us whose ancestors were involved with the war in some way.

How do you go about doing your research?

What I like to do is to go back to what historians call the primary resources. These are the actual letters, documents, military records and courthouse records that those in the past left for us. These resources can tell you what people were feeling, doing, or thinking. There is a special connection when you get to handle these treasures.When it comes to fiddle tunes, that is another special connection to these folks: to be able to hear what they heard; to play what they played; to sing what they sang. That is pretty wild when you think about it. This is all we've got to approximate the kind of world these folks lived in. It is a link. It is the soul of their whole society. You can take the music of the minstrel stage, the music played in parlors and kitchens, and the old shape-note hymns and, with these, conjure up a living, breathing, feeling of the past. One example of this is the tune, "Camp Chase." Devil Sol Carpenter was a Confederate prisoner of war at Camp Chase, Ohio. They had a fiddle contest and whoever won would be released. Carpenter played this tune and won and was released! The tune he played has been called "Camp Chase" ever since. The music, you see, is a living link to that incident.

How would describe your hammered dulcimer playing techniques?

For me, the melody is the most important element when playing a traditional tune. Embellishments should complement the melody. The simpler the arrangement the better. I like a clean sound.

What is your construction secret that gives your hammered dulcimers their special tone quality?

I don't have the slightest idea! Maybe it's dumb luck! I have never analyzed one to understand what it does. Of course, I do use some common-sense ideas like using a fairly free-floating sound board. I imagine that the size of the box and the string length probably affect the overall tone quality.

What suggestions do you have about buying or choosing a hammered dulcimer?

Choose one that feels right when you play it. One that has a good response and doesn't sound hard. One that has a nice round tone to it.

Jim Taylor
PO Box 702
Mars Hill NC 28754
828-689-4971
jim@jimandsheila.com
www.jimandsheila.com

Joe Holbert is a public school music educator in the mountains of western North Carolina. He lives with his wife, Karen, in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

DISCOGRAPHY

Come Before Winter (CD/cassette)

The Falls of Richmond (Cassette)

Little Rose Is Gone (Cassette)

The Civil War Collection, Vol. 1 (CD combining *The Falls of Richmond and Little Rose Is Gone*)

The Bright Sunny South (CD/cassette)

The Last Fierce Charge (Cassette)

Christmas On The Mountain (CD, with Sheila Adams)

One October Morn (CD)

The Civil War Collection, Vol. 2 (CD)

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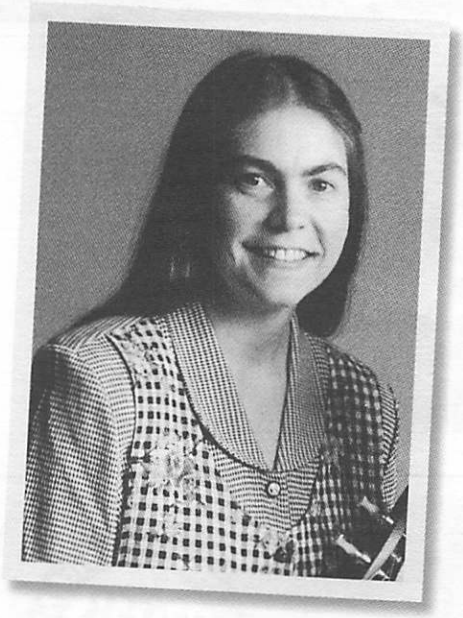
Red River Valley

A Lesson for the Novice Mountain Dulcimer Player



by Heidi Cerrigione • Ellington, CT

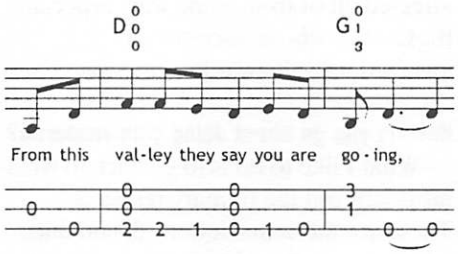
In preparing lessons for novice players, I've found that some of the old favorite melodies from our childhoods work well. With that in mind, I went searching through my Schneider family songbook and came across "Red River Valley."

Speaking of songbooks (and in this case "songbag"), one version of "Red River Valley" was published in 1937 by Carl Sandburg in *The American Songbag.* I learned that it was formerly called "In the Bright Mohawk Valley" with roots in upstate New York. Other early titles were "In the Bright Sherman Valley" and "In the Bright Little Valley."

Further internet research gives credit to James Kerrigan (1896), but it's not clear to which version he may have contributed.

The folksong traveled from New York to Texas, where the cowboys of Red River County changed the song to "Red River Valley." I pulled out the atlas and learned that the Red River forms a good length of the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma.

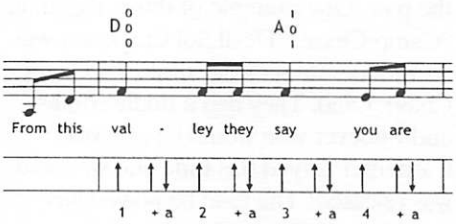
In addition to the variations in title and lyrics, there are also slight variations heard in the melody. You might hear the very first phrase like this:



Just when we're convinced of the American heritage, we find another theory that it's really a Canadian lament referring to the Red River that flows into Lake Winnepeg.

Enough history, let's play. First take a look at the chords written above the music. I've listed the name of the chord and a fingering you can use to make that chord in the DAD tuning.

Hum the melody and strum across your strings using those chord shapes. If you know other shapes of D, G or A chords, try those too. Next, try a bum-ditty strum, playing a bum-ditty (1-and-a) for each beat (4 to a measure) like this:



Sing the first two words; then start your strum pattern on the first syllable of "valley," The arrows indicate an outward strum, but if you're more comfortable strumming inward on the downbeat, feel free to reverse the pattern.

When that feels comfortable, take a look at the tab numbers for playing the melody. Here are some helpful hints for left-hand fingering.

Play the first two notes on the open middle and open melody string, and then use your thumb on the melody string for (2) on "valley." This will free your index finger to put on the (1) of the bass string on "say", and then your middle finger will fall in place for the (1) on the melody string for "you."

One of the important early lessons I learned from my mentor, Neal Walters, was to keep my fingers in contact with the strings. Don't try to lift your hand from fret to fret, but rather move smoothly between them.

One good place to try this is on measure 4 for "bright eyes," moving from (2) to (4). Use your middle finger for this sliding movement on the melody string, and your index will fall in place for the (5) on the middle string.

If you'd like to hear what this tab sounds like and you have internet access, go to www.doofusmusic.com/page2.html. I've played a nice slow version of "Red River Valley" and you can play along with me. There are also many more verses posted there.

One last hint—the verse and chorus are identical, so once you've learned the first two lines of the song, you've got it all.

Heidi Cerrigione, a frequent contributor of articles for Dulcimer Players News, *teaches and writes books for autoharp and dulcimer, and performs and records with her husband, John, and Neal and Coleen Walters. IW*
heidi@doofusmusic.com

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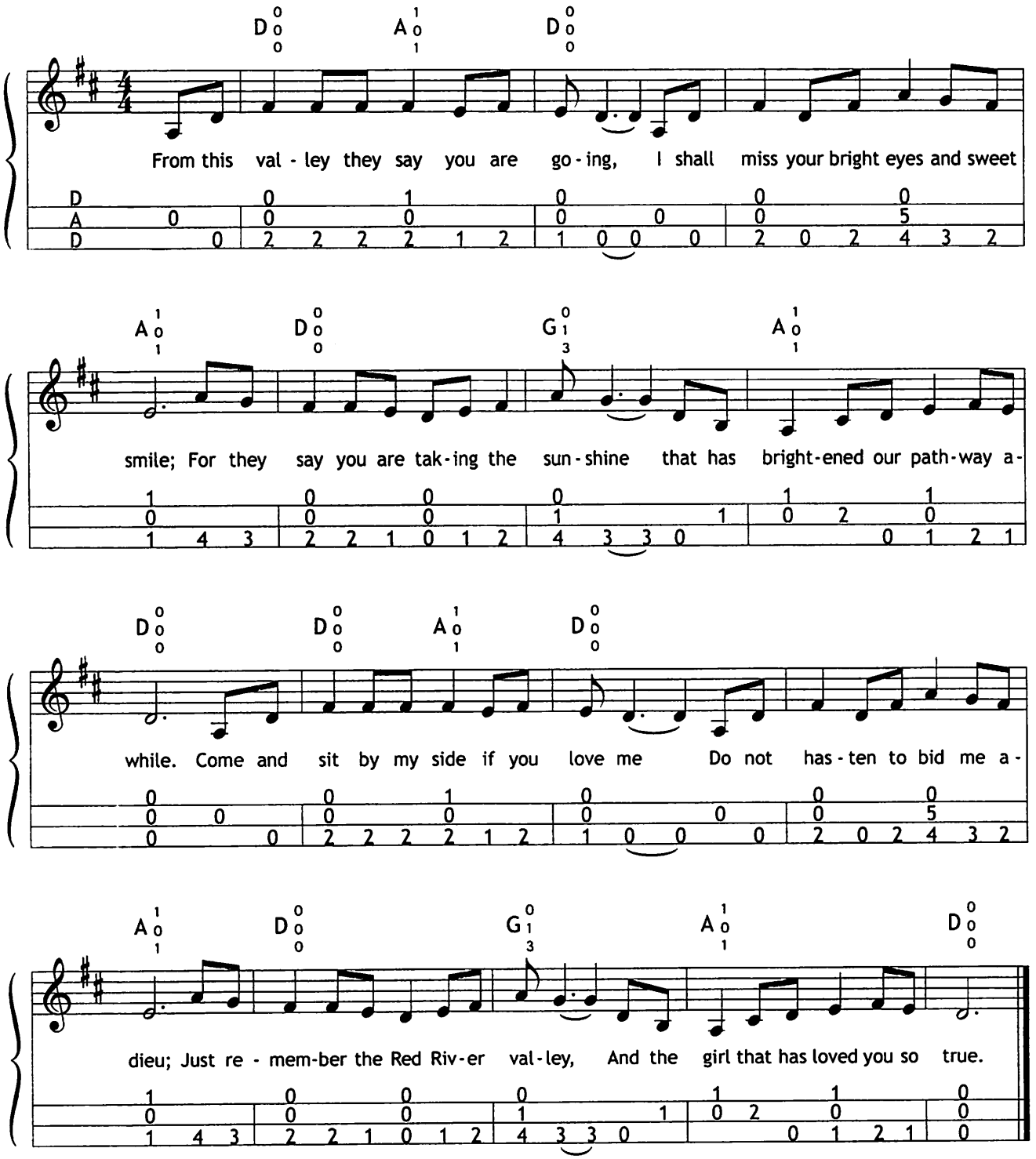
Red River Valley

arr: by Heidi Cerrigione



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Playing Cajun Music on the Mountain Dulcimer

by Lois Hornbostel
Bryson City, North Carolina

It's not surprising that I have such a good time playing Cajun music on the mountain dulcimer. It has great rhythms and interesting new melodies to be tried. Cajun music can be played easily and with authenticity on the mountain dulcimer for several reasons. Both the mountain dulcimer and the Cajun accordion (lead instrument in Cajun bands) have diatonic scales. Cajun fiddlers use a lot of drones, like the dulcimer. The drone sounds are said to date back to the early roots of Cajun music and a droned instrument called the vielle. There is always dancing to Cajun music, so the rhythms are wonderful, and with listening and practice can be reproduced on a strummed mountain dulcimer. I have found as I teach at festivals that these simple, appealing Cajun tunes are accessible to dulcimer players of all skill levels. Novice dulcimer players find the tempos are moderate, the chord progressions spare, and there are not as many notes as American or Celtic fiddle tunes. More experienced mountain dulcimer players can find challenge and enjoyment in the Cajun tradition of improvising on the melodies, taking "breaks," and getting into some of the greatest rhythm "grooves" anywhere!

The Historical Roots of Cajun Music

The Acadien (or "Cajun") people date back to France. In the early 1600s they sailed to the Americas and established the French colony of Acadia, which today makes up the Canadian province of Nova Scotia and adjacent areas. When the British occupied the area in 1755, the Acadiens were exiled from their farmlands. In the next decade they found refuge in southern Louisiana, where they made a new life, farming and fur trapping. French is still the first language for many Cajuns.

Starting with their traditional French music, the Cajuns developed a distinct form of folk music all their own, adding melodic and rhythmic elements from Afro-Caribbean, Appalachian, Celtic, German, Spanish, Native American music, and African-American blues. The Cajuns are known for their sense of community and gatherings that always include great food, lively music, and dancing. The waltz and the two-step are the two main forms of Cajun dance.

Since the mid-seventies, Lois Hornbostel has worked as a performer, author of several Mel Bay books, teacher, and events coordinator. From July 6th through 11th, 2003, she will teach Cajun and Old-Time music adapted for the mountain dulcimer during Augusta Cajun Week in Elkins, WV (www.augusta heritage.com). Lois is completing a new book for Mel Bay entitled Cajun Favorites For Mountain Dulcimer.

Lois Hornbostel
Ldulc@gte.net
PO Box 907
Bryson City, NC 28713

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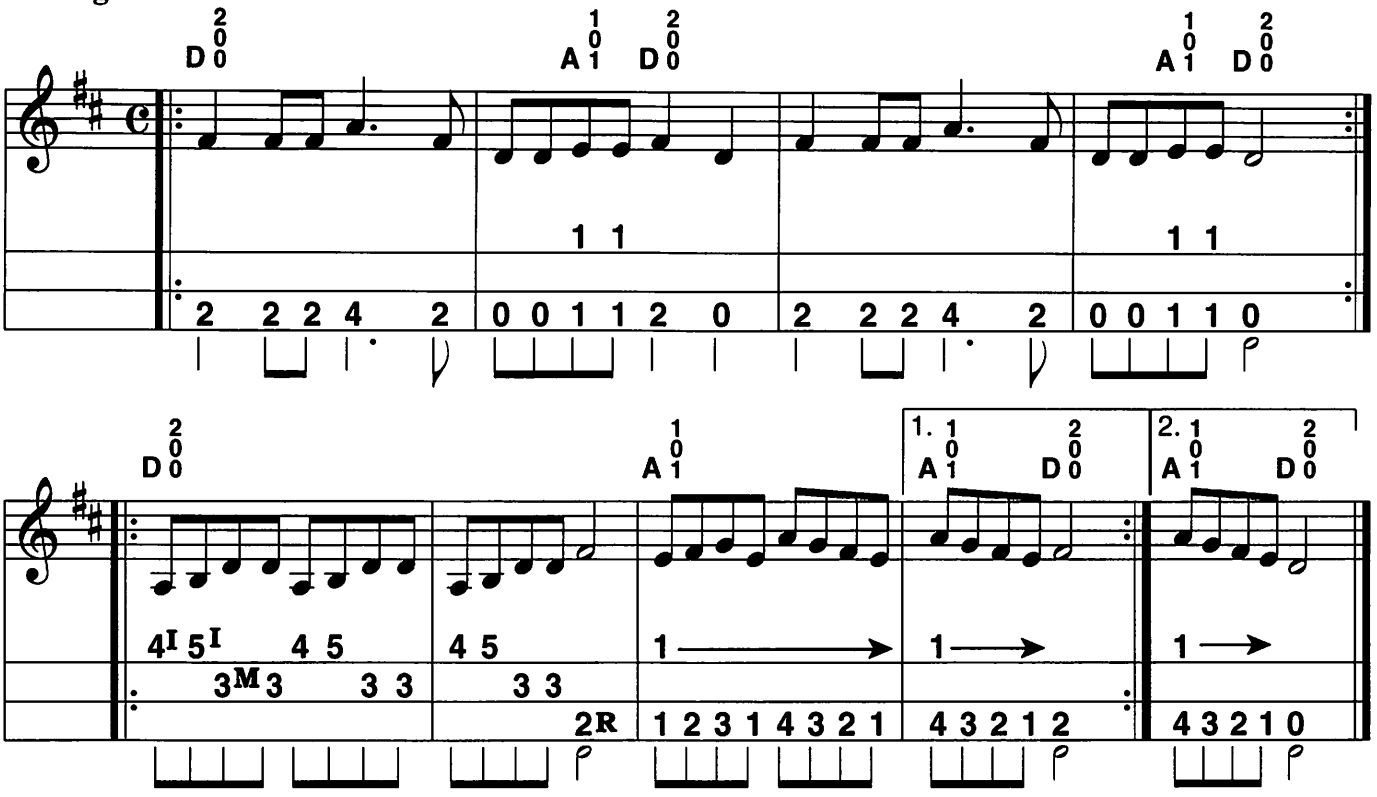
"Two Alligators"
(Deux Cocodries)

From Cajun Favorites for Mountain Dulcimer
by Lois Hornbostel (Mel Bay Publications)

A Traditional Cajun Two-Step
arr. by Lois Hornbostel

Tuning: DAD



Notation and tablature by Maylee Samuels

DAD Tuning. Strum across all strings to get strong rhythm. Horizontal arrows in the tab mean "hold onto that note for the duration of the chord in the harmony." This is to make the music easier to read. "Deux Cocodries" *(dyou kokodree)* has a two-step rhythm and is a song that Cajun children sing. The words in French and English are below. To embellish on this basic melody try some slides into and between notes.

Verses:

Two alligators went off to war,
saying "farewell" to their little children.
Their long tails dragging behind them in the dust,
they went off to fight the elephants.

If the alligators, the alligators, the alligators
are lost on the banks of the bayou, say no more.
If the alligators, the alligators, the alligators
are lost on the banks of the bayou, say no more.

Deux cocodries sont allés à la guerre,
disant "adieu" à leurs petits enfants.
Leurs longues queues traînaient dans la poussière,
ils sont allés combattre les éléphants:

Si les coco-dries, les coco-dries, les cocodries
sur le bord du bayou se sont perdus, n'en parlons plus,
si les coco-dries, les coco-dries, les cocodries
sur le bord du bayou se sont perdus, n'en parlons plus.

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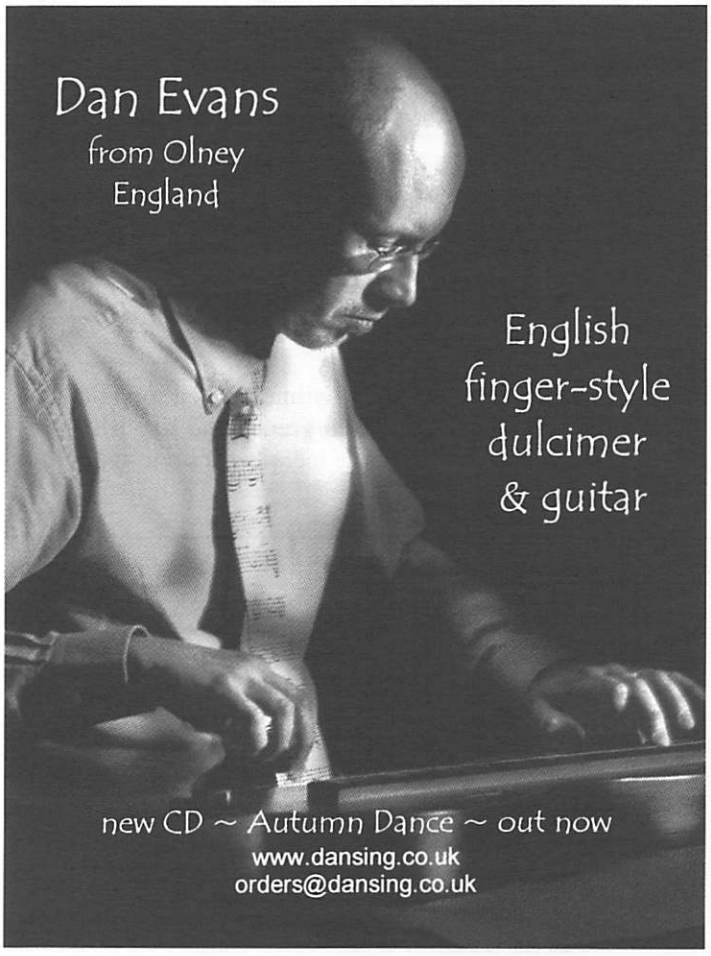

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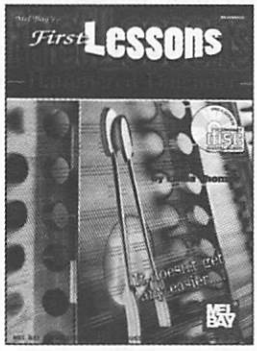

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Adapting A Spanish Classical Guitar Composition To The Hammered Dulcimer

by Anna Duff • St. David, Arizona

I have been playing hammered dulcimer for fifteen years. Like most of us I started with fiddle tunes and Celtic melodies. About four years ago, I was studying with my friend, classical pianist Dr. Janne Irvine. She suggested that I work out a few Spanish/Latin pieces on the dulcimer. It made sense to me to learn this style of music since Celtic gigs were far and few between here in the Southwest. I immediately went to the nearest music store and bought several CDs of illustrious Spanish classical guitar players — Julian Bream, John Williams, and, of course, Maestro Andrés Segovia. As I began listening to this music, I knew in my heart this was the music I was meant to play.

A year ago I had the great fortune of meeting Fulbright scholar guitarist Dr. Jorge L. Pastrana, and have been continuing my studies with him. We have been busy adapting Latin guitar pieces to the hammered dulcimer and occasionally performing together. This piece, "Lágrima," was one of the first compositions we adapted.

"Lágrima," (The Tear) was written by Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909) and exemplifies the romantic spirit of nineteenth-century Spain. Sometimes referred to as the "Father of Modern Guitar," Tárrega wrote many beautiful melodies but none were published until he was fifty years old. His compositions influenced some of the greatest guitar performers of the 20th century and continue to do so today.

I play a 16/15 "Piano Forte" hammered dulcimer built by Nicholas Blanton. It also has an additional left bridge with the bass notes G A B C F & Bb. I use these bass notes in many of my arrangements. I begin to use them at the very beginning of the piece if at all possible; it depends on the key. If you have this extra bridge or these notes in other places on your instrument, try using them throughout your music; they will add a lot of richness.

"Lágrima" starts off in the key of E major and modulates to E minor. The key of E is a guitar-friendly key, and is used often. It's a little tricky for us hammered dulcimer players because of the placements of our D#s, but still very doable. It is also important to know that classical guitar music is written an octave higher than it sounds. In other words, it sounds an octave lower than written. I play this piece an octave lower than written except for the bass E; my instrument doesn't have this note. I had to compromise and use the low E on my right side bass bridge. If you play an extended range hammered dulcimer you will have the lower bass E. If you play a 12/11, play the music as written.

Now let's get started! I have numbered the measures for quick reference. There are three voices in this piece: melody, accompanying harmony notes, and the bass line. The melody notes

Continued on next page

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are written with the stems up. Accompanying and bass line notes are stems down. To be able to play all three parts you will have to use a technique hammered dulcimer players call "hands separation." If you have never tried this before, this melody is perfect to get you started. I'll walk you through it.

First measure: begin by playing the melody notes with your left hand only. I start the melody on my treble bridge. You will find the notes G#, A, B on the left hand side of the first marked course. As you play these notes, count the quarter notes as two eighth notes. 1 & 2 & 3 &...It will help you with your timing. Now, on the right-side bass bridge, first marked course, find your accompanying notes E & F#. Go across to your right-side treble bridge and find your low G#. It's probably your bottom string. Now play these notes with your right hand together with your G# A & B melody. You are still playing just the quarter notes but will continue to count them as eighth notes. Now with your right hand, just add the note, B, on the up beats, the "ands." The B note, which I use, is on the right hand side of the treble bridge, on the first marked course. Congratulations! You are now doing some hand separation. This technique occurs throughout most of the piece.

In measure two, continue playing the melody with your left hand—a dotted half-note F#; right-hand for the bass, a dotted half-note D#. Use your lowest D#. Now play the accompanying notes. You can alternate your hands with these notes in this part of the measure.

Measure three is the same as one. Measure four is the same as two except it adds a bass note, B, on the third beat. This is where I use my left-side bass bridge. If you don't have this bridge, just play the measure exactly the same as the second.

In measure five we continue with our hand separation. This measure can be tricky because you will have quite a reach to play the D# melody note. Mine is placed at the very top of my right-side bass bridge. Just take it slow, you will get used to the reach with practice. Remember to keep your accompanying notes in the lower octave.

You might want to practice this measure as I explained in the beginning: play the melody first, and then add your bass to the melody. Finally, add the up beat accompanying notes.

There is nothing tricky in measure six! You may alternate your hands throughout this measure. Once more, in measure seven, I suggest you learn the melody first and then add the harmony accompanying notes. They form a beautiful descending chromatic run! I like to bring these notes out, especially the last time around. I use my left-side bass bridge for the A# and bass B. Yet again, you will have to compromise with this measure if you don't have these lower notes.

Measure eight is the end of the E-major part and is simple enough. This brings us to the E-minor section, measure nine. The wavy line before the E-minor and B^7 chord means to roll the chord from bottom to top note unless otherwise specified. Be careful of your dynamics and timing when playing a rolled chord. Your bottom notes should be played lighter so that your melody note stands out. You also need to play the roll quickly enough so that you're not behind the beat. But you have to do so fluidly, without it sounding rushed. I begin these rolls with my left hand, landing on the melody with my right. It's very natural for me but you will need to find whatever is comfortable and works for you. At times, I do switch leads of my rolls.

In measure ten we have an octave E in the melody and bass line, followed by thirds for the accompanying notes. I play these thirds on my right-side bass bridge. Remember to play your melody and bass dotted-half notes loud enough so that they carry through the eighth-note accompanying thirds.

Once again, measure eleven starts out with an E-minor roll. I also start this three-note roll with my right hand. I play the entire roll on the right-side bass bridge so that my left hand can play the melody and my right hand play the bass line octaves on the second and third beats.

Measure twelve begins with a B-major roll. On this roll I use my left-side bass bridge, starting on my bass B note with my left hand. If you don't have this note just start the roll on your treble bridge, the B in your first marked course. Remember that the next three notes are accompanying notes and the last two eighth notes, B & F# are melody.

In measure thirteen we return to our hand separation technique with a lovely ascending run in both the bass and the melody. Then, in measure fourteen, we descend with an A in the bass. I like to use my left-side bass bridge A for this run, but the right-side bass bridge A will work fine.

Finally, in measure fifteen and sixteen, we return to octaves and thirds and end on the E with G in the bass, the final note being a bass E.

After I work out a piece of music and can play it fairly smoothly, I like to check my timing with a metronome. Make friends with your metronome. It can be a valuable tool. When my timing is fine, it's time to shut off the metronome, go back to the beginning and work on the dynamic line of the piece. This often takes me as long or longer to do and is so important! (It could be another teaching article in itself.) A few basic things to remember: play your accompanying notes softer than your melody. This will take practice. Think about each note and each phrase and how they work together. Your expression is what will make the composition yours. I have experienced playing a piece of music almost note for note with another musician whose expression was so different from mine that it sounded like a whole different piece!

It's been my pleasure to teach you "Lágrima." If you have any questions I would love to hear from you! As Jorge would say to me, "Enjoy!"

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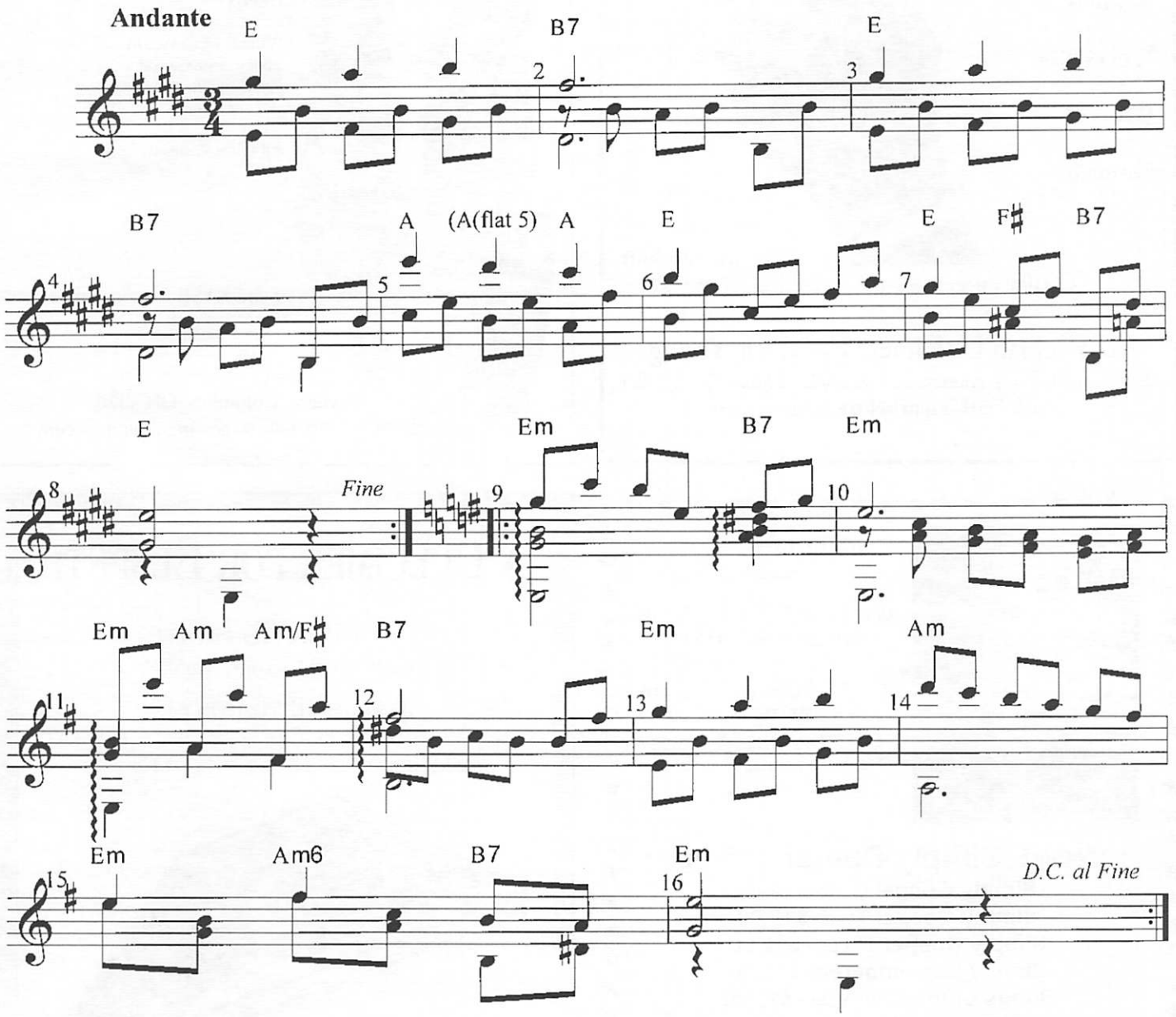
Lágrima

Francisco Tárrega
1852–1909

Hammered Dulcimer Adaptation
Anna Duff & Dr. J. Pastrana



Anna Duff has played the hammered dulcimer since 1986. She was the "hammer" of Arm and Hammer with Stefan George, with whom she performed for over thirteen years and recorded five albums. In 2001 she released her first Spanish/Latin solo album, *Dulcianna—A Southwest Dulcimer.* Anna teaches and performs at festivals throughout the country and is the founder of the Southwest Dulcimer Festival.

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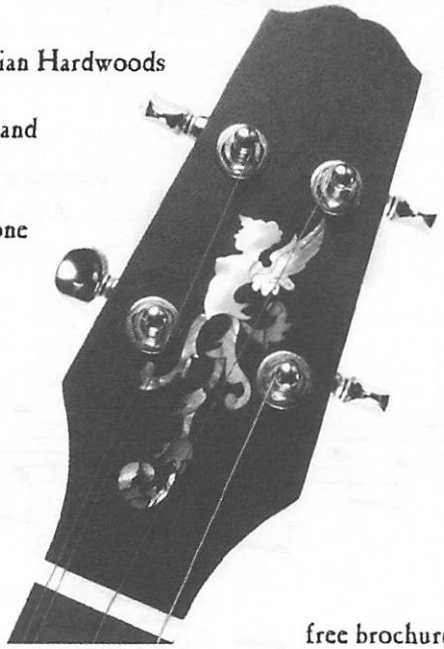

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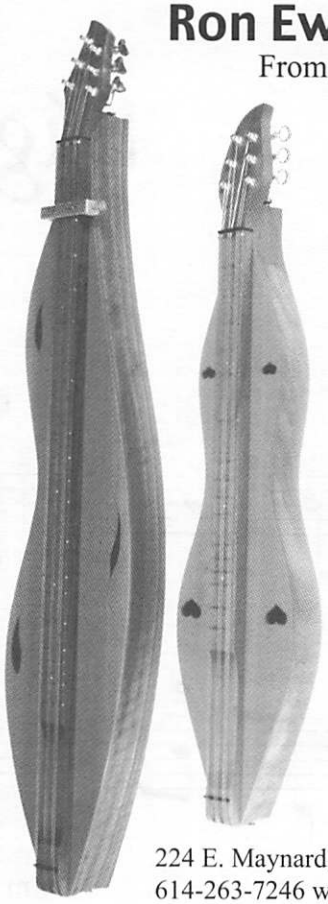

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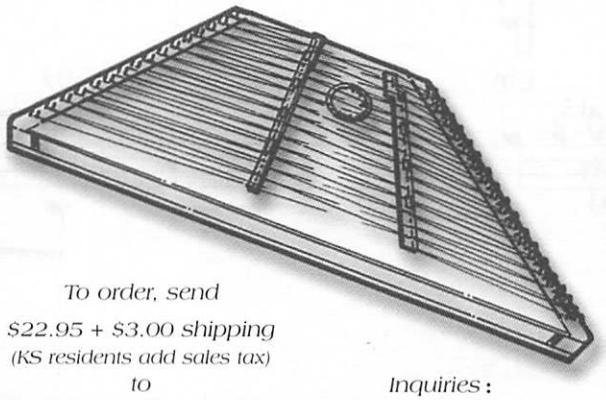

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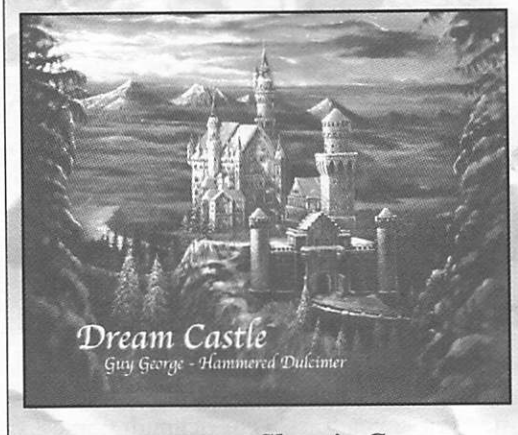

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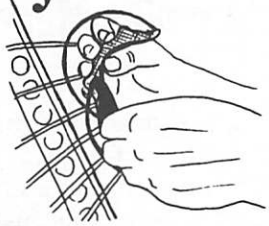

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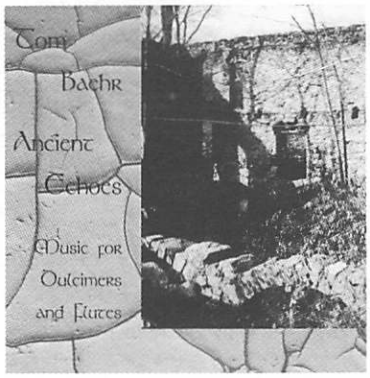

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Mountain Dulcimer Tales & Traditions

by Ralph Lee Smith

Oscar Schmidt Mountain Dulcimers? You're Kidding!

They ain't no such animule! But wait a minute, there is!

Oscar Schmidt and Company is the famous maker of autoharps, and the company also produced a number of kinds of odd musical instruments in the earlier years of the 20th century. Their web page shows that the company currently produces autoharps, and both acoustic and electric guitars. You never could have told me that the firm has ever produced mountain dulcimers. But there could be no doubt about it after I received a thick envelope, with a letter several pages long and many photographs, that was sent to me a few years ago by Brian A. Knight, a luthier and clockmaker of Ringwood, Illinois.

Brian's letter said that he had in his shop a dulcimer owned by Cathy Roush. Cathy had actually mentioned it to me when we had met at the Cranberry Gathering. The words, "Oscar Schmidt International," are clearly stamped on its tailpiece. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show the instrument, and Figure 4 shows the stamping on the tailpiece. We will call this dulcimer Oscar Schmidt No. 1.

This is an attractive instrument of what might be called early modern style, vintage of 1960s–70s. It has no 6½ fret, suggesting a lack of interface by the maker with today's styles. The spacing of the four strings, shown in Figure 3, and their anchoring in pairs at the foot, are highly unusual. Brian stated that the action is high, another indication of an older approach. He provided the following particulars:

- Length: 34⅛ inches.
- Vibrating String Length: 27⁷⁄₁₆ inches.
- Width at upper bout: 7 inches.
- Width at lower bout: 5⁷⁄₁₆ inches.

Cathy wanted to know if she should instruct Brian to: lower the action, replace or repair buzzing frets, replace the friction tuners with geared tuning machines, and insert 6½ and 13½ frets into the fret board—in other words, to change it into a fully modern dulcimer. I advised against it. While the instrument cannot be considered a rarity, it is what it is, and what it is, is interesting! My own view is that, if one wants a fully modern dulcimer, its wiser to patronize the many excellent contemporary makers that advertise in DPN, rather than take what might be called an early modern dulcimer and update it. As time passes, "early modern" is drifting into antique.

I put the photos and letter in my file, and waited. Sure enough—a few weeks ago, another Oscar Schmidt dulcimer came along. And, once again, I was in for a surprise.

Joel Whittemore of Livingston, Texas sent me an envelope of pictures of the instrument. Three are reproduced here. We'll call this Oscar Schmidt No. 2.

Figure 5 shows the full instrument and Figure 6 shows the head. In its shape and design, it doesn't resemble Cathy Roush's dulcimer at all! The instrument is set up in standard, modern four-string fashion, with a 6½ fret and a paired melody string. Instead of having the Oscar Schmidt name branded into the tailpiece, it appears on the label that is visible through the lower right soundhole in Figure 7.

"Several years ago," Joel wrote, "in Terre Haute, Indiana, while perusing an antique mall, I came upon a 'Hippy Banjo.' It was really a mountain dulcimer with an Oscar Schmidt label in it. The label says,

> 1879–1979
> Oscar
> Schmidt
> Model: D4
> Serial No: "D4 was in rubber stamp and no serial number was given."

Joel provided the following dimensions:

- Length of fret board: 36⅞ inches.
- Length of sound box: 28¾ inches
- Vibrating String Length: 26½ inches
- Width at upper bout: 5½ inches
- Width at lower bout: 6¼ inches

Joel makes an educated guess that this model was intended as a relatively inexpensive instrument for use in classes and learning groups. In fact, it might serve such a purpose very well. But neither Brian, Joel, nor I have any real knowledge of what the plot of the tale of the two types of Oscar Schmidt dulcimers may be. When this article is published, I will send a copy to the Oscar Schmidt Company and ask them for information. I will carry their reply in this column. Meanwhile, if you have an Oscar Schmidt dulcimer or know where one is, please let me know! Maybe there are still other models!

Note: Email address. I receive a number of queries from very courteous people who gently inquire to DPN about my email address. I am happy to provide it, and welcome correspondence. My address is rls2@erols.com.

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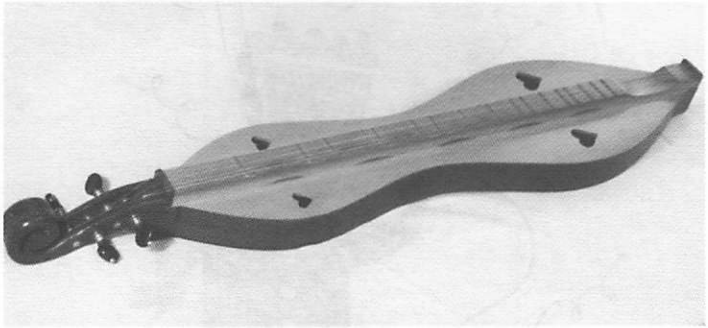

Fig.1: Cathy Roush's Oscar Schmidt dulcimer.

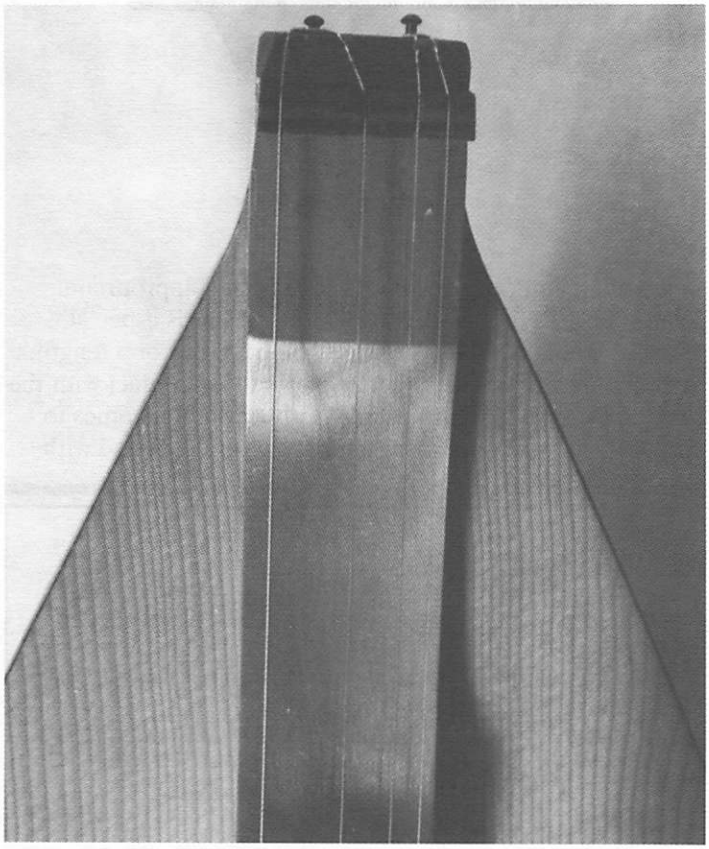

Fig. 2: Tailpiece of Cathy's dulcimer, showing string arrangement.

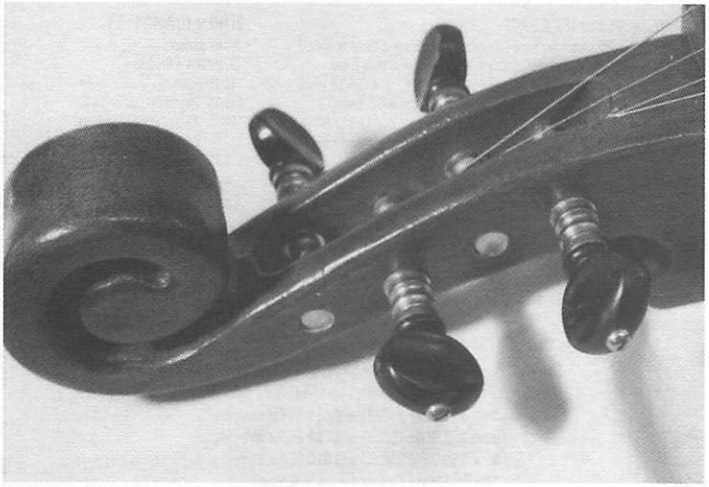

Fig. 3: Head of Cathy's dulcimer.

Fig. 4: Tailpiece of Cathy's dulcimer, showing Oscar Schmidt name.

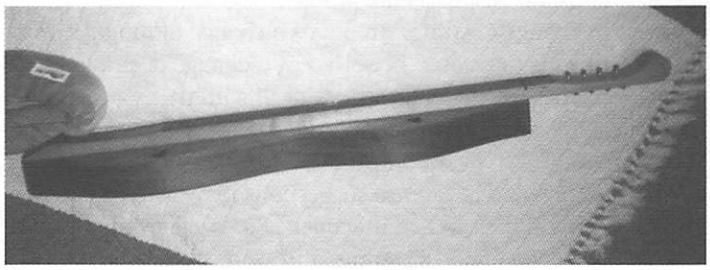

Fig. 5: Joel Whittemore's Oscar Schmidt dulcimer.

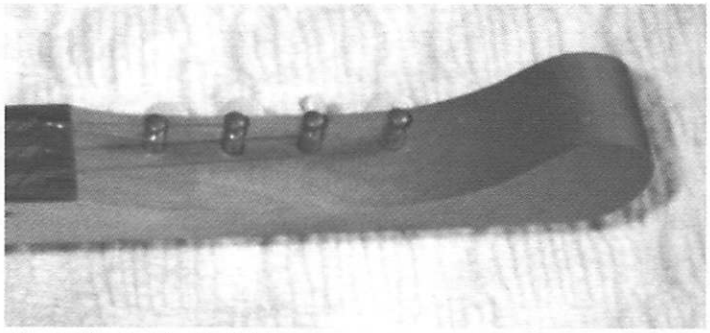

Fig. 6: Head of Joel's dulcimer.

Fig. 7: Lower right soundhole of Joel's dulcimer, showing Oscar Schmidt label.

Technical Dulcimer

Sam Rizzetta

Choosing Strings for Fretted Dulcimer

In the 1999 and 2000 DPN issues most of the Technical Column topics dealt with strings. Since we are concerned with stringed instruments, it comes as no big surprise that the subject of strings is an inexhaustible topic and an unending source of questions. I was reminded of this recently when I was asked to solve some problems players were having with their fretted dulcimers. Each of the dulcimers was built by a different maker, each player assumed something was wrong with the dulcimer, and in each case a change of strings solved the problem. In some instances the problem was introduced by a recent change of strings. In others a change in tuning introduced problems that could be solved by a change of strings. Some of the past columns on strings dealt with the theoretical information needed to understand and solve such problems. However, I gave only limited practical examples. I suspect that many players can use suggestions for exactly what strings to put on their fretted dulcimers. So, I will give some specific guidelines for choosing strings and string gauges.

The first authority on your dulcimer, and appropriate strings for it, is the builder who made it. This is especially true if the builder is also an experienced player or a longtime manufacturer. However, a lot of players lose contact with the builder, or assume they are on their own when it comes to strings. Over the years strings break and are replaced with

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whatever strings are readily obtainable. Players may change to different tunings and the original string gauges may not be optimal or even workable. If you don't have other dulcimer players or stores that sell dulcimers nearby, it may be difficult to get sound advice. And prepackaged sets of "dulcimer strings" may not be the convenience they seem to be. Such sets will suit only a certain type of dulcimer and specific pitch ranges and tunings. If this happens to fit your dulcimer and the tunings you use, you're in luck. If not, your dulcimer may not play and sound its best, and dulcimer playing may be less rewarding than it could be.

For better or worse, dulcimers, and the tunings used with them, are less standardized than other instruments. Almost all guitars have similar vibrating string lengths. This is the distance from the nut to the saddle, which I will call "scale length." Standard scale length for full-size guitars is about 25½ inches, varying mostly from 24⅞ inches to 25⅝ inches. Dulcimers are more diverse, ranging from 25 inches to 30 inches in scale length, with some specialty models smaller, shorter, and pitched higher. But the majority of traditional, full-size dulcimers have a scale length of 26 inches to 28 inches with some designs being a bit shorter, around 25 inches, to ease the left hand reach for fretting (or to simplify building by copying fret positions from guitars). Traditional dulcimer tunings and string gauges evolved for the 25 inch to 28 inch scale length range, so that is what we will consider.

String choice confusion is compounded by the many different tunings used with dulcimers and the fact that we may tune higher or lower to play in different keys. One of the older and most common tunings for 3-string dulcimer is "sol sol do," generally the notes A A D (high to low). This would be D ionian mode (D major), with "do" of the D major scale starting at the 3rd fret on the first, or melody string.

The strings I usually use for this are:

A = 0.014″ diameter (plain steel)
A = 0.014″ diameter (plain steel)
D = 0.020″ wound to 0.022″ wound (or 0.020″ plain phosphor bronze)

Strings are plain steel music wire unless a wound string is indicated, and gauges are diameter in inches.

I have a dulcimer I tune much higher to play mostly in G ionian, D D G, while occasionally tuning down to A A D. It is strung much lighter:

D = 0.011″
D = 0.011″
G = 0.016″

Some 4-string dulcimers use a double melody string for the A A D tuning, making it A A A D. In that case, you will

Continued on next page

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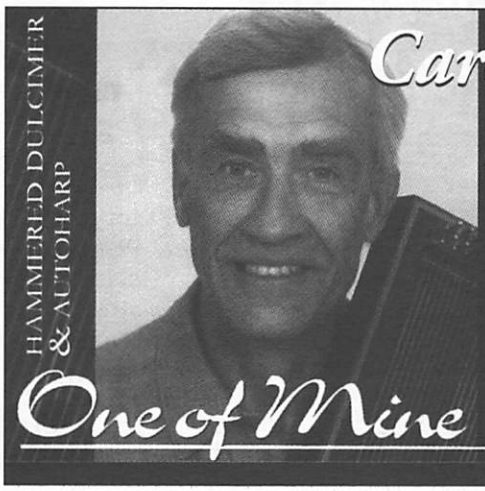

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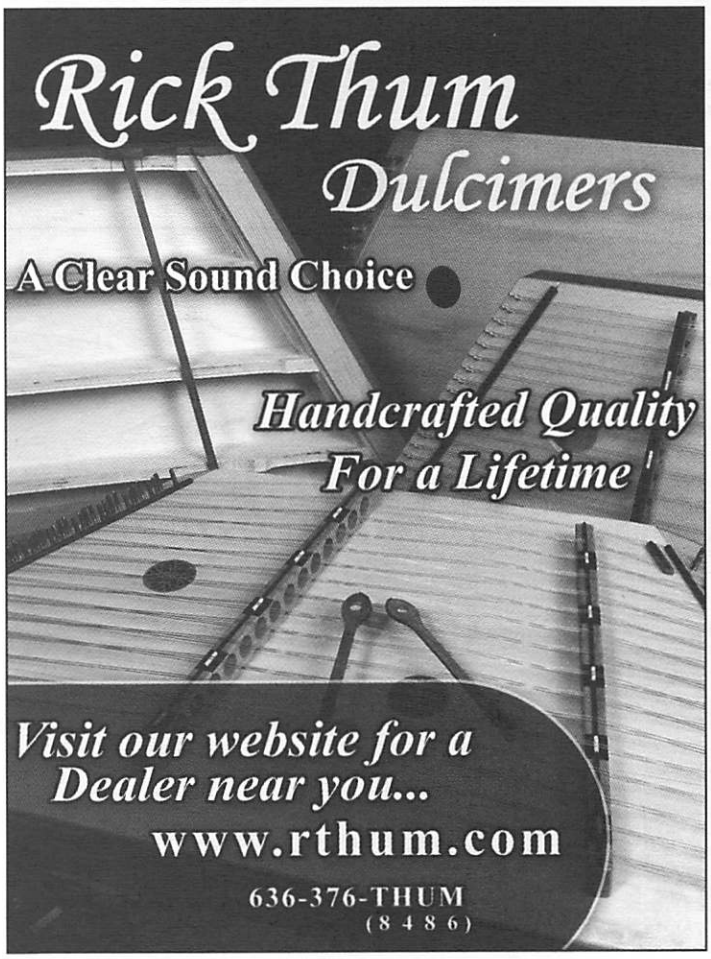
be noting, or fretting, the first two strings together. Some 4 string dulcimers are strung with 0.014″ wire for all the A strings. A lighter gauge for the two melody strings will make them easier to press down and keep the melody from drowning out the lower drone strings. For playing primarily with double melody strings try stringing like this:

A = 0.013″
A = 0.013″
A = 0.014″
D = 0.020″ wound to 0.022″ wound

If you like to change tunings to play in different modes, or different keys for singing, remember that it is always safe for the dulcimer to tune strings lower. The only real limit in this regard is that strings tuned very low and slack may buzz on the frets. And tone will be softer and less bright. It may or may not be safe to tune higher depending on the scale length. If the dulcimer is strong, and the scale length not too long, you can probably go up a half-step or whole step for short periods. Dulcimers are generally rather strong relative to the tensions imposed on them. But it is possible to exceed the tension limits of what works well for playing and the limits of what is safe for the instrument. More on this later.

The above tunings are common for playing in the traditional style of strumming while fretting with a noter stick. I have always liked the southwest Virginia tuning which builder and player Roscoe Russell showed me. It also is played strumming and noter style with double melody strings, but all four strings are strung and tuned the same, in unison. If all strings are A (0.014″), you can play in D major or A mixolydian without retuning. If all strings are tuned to a high D (0.010″ or 0.011″), you can play in G major and D mixolydian. Since many major-key tunes can be played or arranged in mixolydian, it is easy to play certain oldtime tunes that change key, like Flop Eared Mule. The bright tone of the high drones and double melody strings sounds great with a stringband for square dances. Heavy, strongly constructed dulcimers, and ones that have shorter scale lengths, can be made louder for strumming by stringing with slightly larger diameter strings. But I would not deviate from the above suggested diameters by more than 0.001″ or 0.002″, and only very cautiously. It is better to have a quiet dulcimer than a warped or broken dulcimer.

Dulcimer builder and player Howie Mitchell popularized playing on four equidistant strings, fretting all strings with the fingers while plucking instead of strumming. By adding an extra fret (the 6½ fret) and using a do' do' sol do (usually D' D' A D) tuning (high to low) it is possible to play many chords and play full major scales in several keys. This is still my favorite and most-used tuning. Try these gauges:



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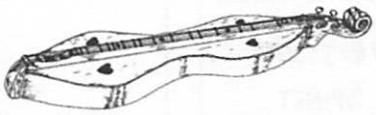

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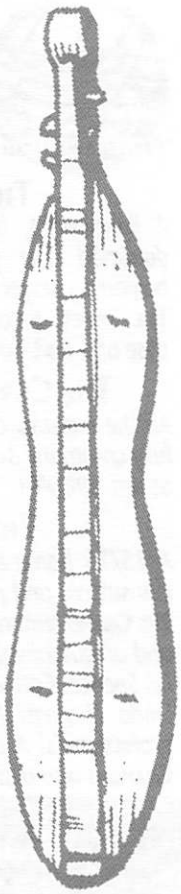

D' = 0.010″
D' = 0.010″
A = 0.014″
D = 0.020″ wound to 0.022″ wound

With my finger style of playing some of my dulcimers sound a little better with D' = 0.011″and some with D' = 0.012″.

You can easily extrapolate string gauges for other tunings by applying some common sense to these guidelines. For instance, some players are using the tuning D´ A A D:

D' = 0.010″
A = 0.014″
A = 0.014″
D = 0.020″ wound to 0.022″ wound

There are no absolute rules for picking string gauges for the different pitches to which the strings are tuned. It may seem that gauges are lighter for high-pitched strings and heavier for low-pitched strings to make each string have the same tension. But this is not entirely the case. Our goal is to control the volume of each string so that each note has the same loudness, or a balance that pleases us. For strumming and noter-style playing it may be desirable for the melody to be louder than the drones. For fingerstyle playing I like strings to be equal in volume. Some similarity in tension will make the strings feel more uniform for fretting. But a balanced sound for the music comes first. If a string seems too loud, replace it with a smaller (lighter) gauge; if too soft, replace with a larger (heavier) gauge. If a string seems too hard to fret, try a smaller gauge. If you prefer to always tune lower than I've indicated, and strings seem slack and weak sounding, try larger gauges.

Here is another example. I used to build some very short, 19-inch scale length dulcimers that were made to tune high and to be small for traveling and camping. I call them "canoe paddle dulcimers" because the bodies are shaped somewhat like the blade of a canoe paddle. They are strung with relatively large diameter strings to play outdoors and to be loud for their size. After experimenting to obtain the best balance, I came up with gauges:

do' = 0.012″
do' = 0.012″
sol = 0.016″
do = 0.025″ wound

Perfect balance may not be possible, but we can find acceptable compromises. The gauges I've suggested are ones that work for me on my dulcimers and tunings. They may work very well for you, or slight changes may better suit your dulcimer, playing style, and tuning preferences.

to be continued

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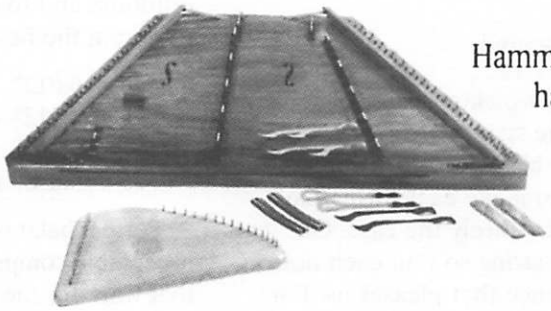

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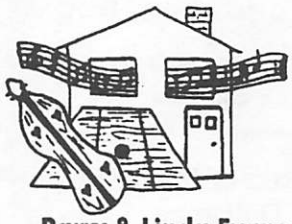

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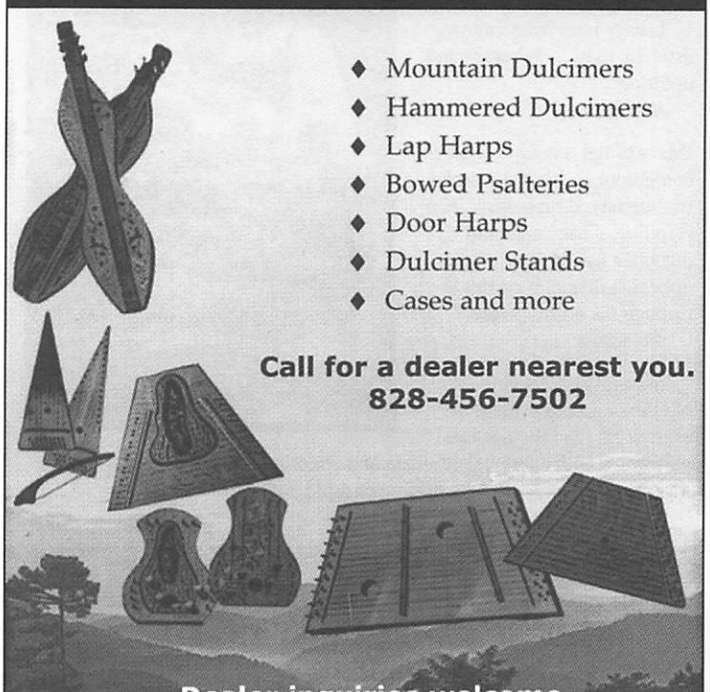

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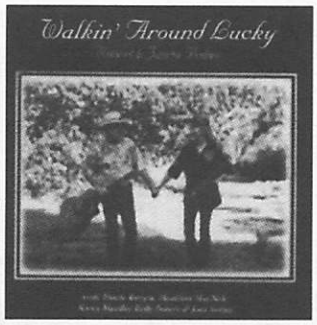

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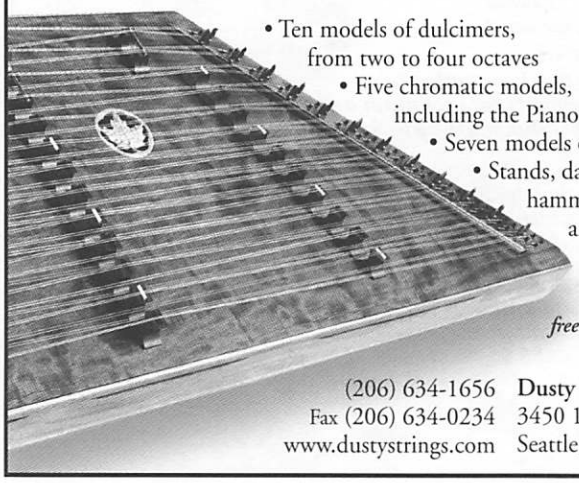

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De-Mystify Your Dulcimer!

by Jody Marshall

Do any of the following apply to you?

■ I'm building up a repertoire on the hammered dulcimer, but I still don't feel like I really know my way around on the instrument.

■ When I'm learning a tune, I play up and down on one side as much as possible, and usually avoid crossing to the other side until I absolutely have to.

■ The left side of the treble bridge is one big mystery. For that matter, so is the bass bridge!

■ I get totally messed up when I start a tune or phrase on a different hand from the one I'm used to.

■ I can learn a tune a certain way, only to have someone show me a more efficient hammering pattern later.

■ Where are the stupid chords?!

■ I love the hammered dulcimer but secretly believe that it's a mysterious creature that doesn't make much sense!

If you found yourself nodding in agreement, don't worry. It can take a while to really get to know your instrument and to feel comfortable moving around on it. But you can stretch the boundaries of your comfort level and go a long way toward solving the mystery of the multi-stringed trapezoid by learning to recognize its inherent patterns. Here are some drills designed to help you do just that, starting with a review of several scale patterns.

Back To Basics

Paying attention to the bridge markers while playing scales can help you learn to move more easily from one side of the treble bridge to the other (and from the treble bridge to the bass bridge, and back again). For the purposes of this exercise, we'll be using a G scale, starting on the G on the right side of the treble bridge and ending up on the high G on the left side. But all three of the following patterns will work strting on any markedcourse on the right side of the treble bridge, as well as on the bass bridge. A "marked course" refers to those pieces of inlaid wood or plastic on the bridge that are white on most dulcimers. Unmarked courses are usually black. On some dulcimers, though, the pattern is reversed. In any case, you should have fewer marked than unmarked courses. If all of your markers are the same color, you might want to differentiate them somehow (a little dab of correction fluid on the appropriate courses works well).

1 You may already know the most basic major-scale pattern. I call it the 4/4 pattern, since it uses four notes on one side and four on the other. To play it, start on the aforementioned G on your *left* hand and play the first four notes up the instrument (G, A, B, C) in an alternating-hands pattern (left-right-left, etc). You'll end up on the next marked course (the C). Then cross to the left side of the bridge with your left hand and strike the D directly across from your original G. Notice that this D is also a marked course. Again in an alternating pattern, play up to the high G to finish the scale.

2 Now start on your *right* hand. This time you'll be using a 5/3 pattern (be sure to alternate your hammers). The first five notes will be on the right side, and the remaining three will be on the left, again ending on the high G. (Notice that note five—a D—is *above* a marked course, as is the E that you cross to on the left side.)

Continued on next page

3 The final scale pattern we'll consider is 6/2. Start on your *left* hand on the G, and (alternating, of course) play the first six notes on the right side of the bridge. You'll end up on a note that's below a marked course (an E), and you will likewise cross to a note that's *below* a marked course (F#) before finishing up your scale).

It's useful to practice coming down the scales as well as going up. Notice that, if you don't repeat the top note of the scale (in our example, the high G), you can go back down the scale simply by playing the 5/3 pattern "backwards." But repeating the top note forces you into one of the other patterns on the way down, provided you alternate your hammers on every note. Try it both ways—it's good practice.

So why is it possible to play three different patterns for the same scale? Because certain notes on the dulcimer are found in more than one place, in the same octave. When you're talking about major scales (assuming that a marked course on the right side of the treble or on the bass bridge is your starting point), notes five and six of the scale are the ones that "repeat." For example, in a G scale, notes D and E are on both the right and left sides of the treble bridge.

The Nuts And Bolts Of Chords

Playing different chord patterns is another way to get more comfortable moving from one side of the treble bridge to the other, as well as from the bass bridge to the right side of the treble. Once you learn these patterns, you can pick a different chord to focus on every time you sit down to practice. For example, on one day you could focus on finding G chords all over your instrument. The next day you could focus on D chords. Before you know it, you'll wonder why you ever thought chords were so scary!

But first, here's a very brief explanation to make sure we're all on the same page: A basic chord is made up of the first, third, and fifth notes of a scale—so, for example, the notes in a G major chord are G, B, and D. Chords come in many different flavors, with major and minor chords being among the most common. (Un-technically speaking, major chords sound happy and minor chords sound more melancholy.)

Note that you can play all three of the notes of a G major chord on the right side of the treble bridge, starting on the marked-course G and going up every other note. But it's often more efficient to move sideways rather than straight up and down on the dulcimer. So try the following:

1 Play the G with your *left* hand and the B with your right, then move straight across the bridge from the G with your left hand to play the D. Play the three notes again, observing the shape your hands create (a triangle). This left-right-left chord triangle is the one most players seem to learn first.

2 Less well-known is the right-left-right triangle. Start on the G on your *right* hand, then move across the bridge with your left hand to the B (two notes below the D that's straight across from the original G). Finally, play the D with your right hand.

3 Now go to the A above the G on the right treble and play the same two triangle patterns as in 1 and 2 above. Don't be alarmed by the fact that they sound different from one another—they should! That's because the "left-handed chord" (the pattern of which is described in step 1) gives you an A *Minor* chord (A, C, E) and the "right-handed chord" (described in step 2) gives you an A *Major* chord (A, C#, E).

4 Finally, move up one more note to the B (notice that it's below a marked course) and again play the two patterns described in 1 and 2. Notice that both are minor.

So in summary, here's the deal as it applies to the triangle-shaped chords we've been working on:

- ▲ When you start on your *left* hand on a marked course, you get a *major* chord.
- ▲ When you start on your *right* hand *on* a marked course, you also get a *major* chord.
- ▲ When you start on your *left* hand on a note *above* a marked course, you get a *minor* chord.
- ▲ But, when you start on your *right* hand on a note *above* a marked course, you get a *major* chord.
- ▲ When you start on your *left* hand on a note *below* a marked course, you get a *minor* chord.
- ▲ When you start on your *right* hand on a note *below* a marked course, you also get a *minor* chord.

These same patterns also work going from the bass bridge to the right side of the treble.

OK, now it's time to put your new bridge-crossing skills to the test with a tune.

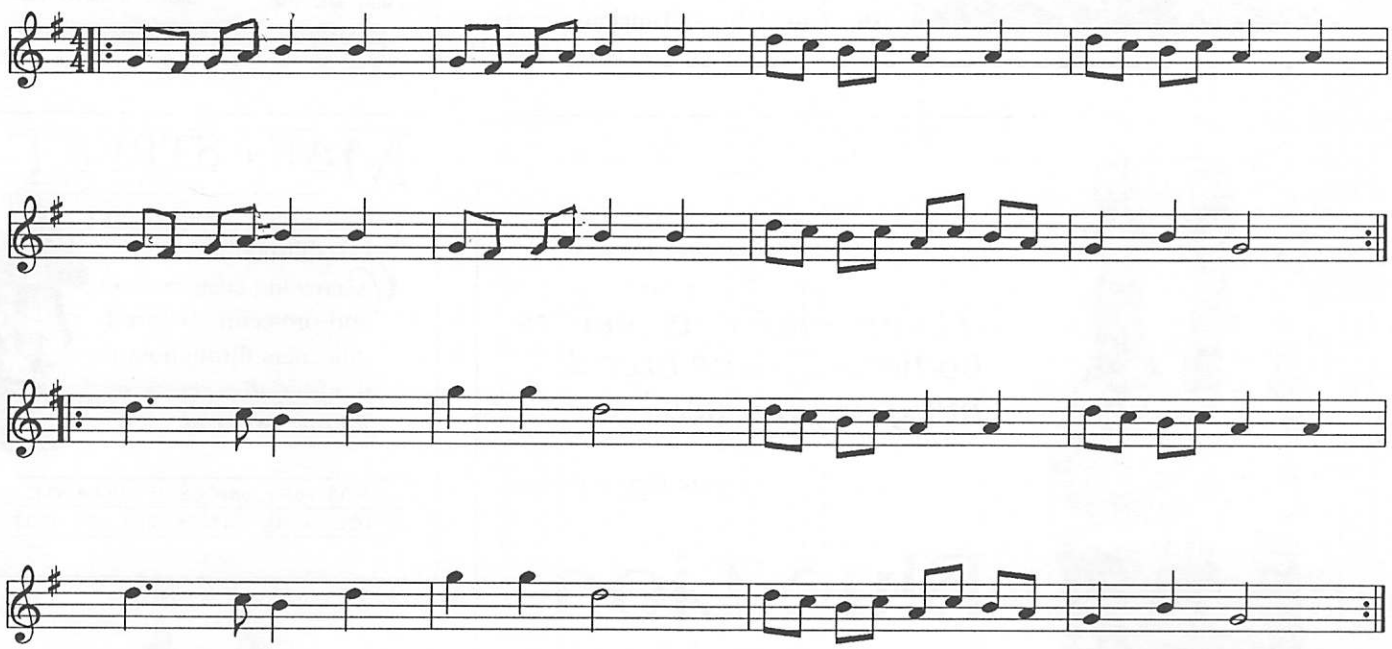
Davy Davy Knick Knack

Over time, many players find that they automatically favor one hand over the other when starting a tune and for playing the strong beats. This certainly makes sense. But if you find that you're able to play a tune in only one pattern and that you get utterly flummoxed when your hands get "mixed up," you might want to try practicing tunes starting on the other hand just to get used to moving around the instrument in a different way. Sometimes the resulting pattern change is minimal, but sometimes—especially when crossing the bridge—a whole new "view" of the tune can come to light.

That's certainly the case with "Davy Davy Knick Knack." This fun little ditty has repetitive phrases that allow you to practice leading with a different hand when the phrase comes around again—that is, assuming you alternate your hands on every single note (no exceptions!). Can you get all the way through "Davy"—two A Parts and two B Parts—without ever hitting two notes in a row with the same hand? You may find that this isn't too challenging in the A Part. But the B Part gets a little more interesting if you cross the bridge for the high G instead of going straight up for it on the right side of the treble bridge. (On many dulcimers, you have to get the G on the left side anyway, since there's a high G#, rather than a G, at the top of the right side.) Good luck!

Davy Davy Knick Knack

Traditional



Jody Marshall teaches private and group lessons on hammered dulcimer near Washington, D.C. and has been an instructor at festivals such as the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops, the Upper Potomac Dulcimer Festival, and the NE Dulcimer Symposium. She performs with a number of different musicians and is a founding member of MoonFire, an award-winning ensemble whose recent CD, Present, Past, and Future, was named Best Celtic Album by the Washington Area Music Association. Jody is currently working on a solo recording featuring both traditional and original music. You can contact Jody at dulcimarsh@earthlink.net.

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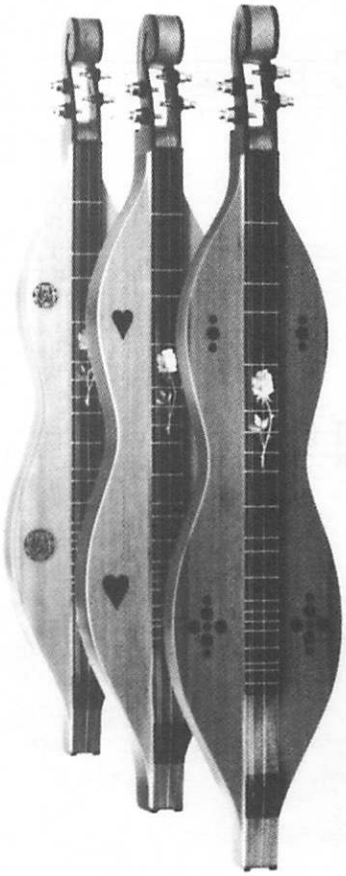

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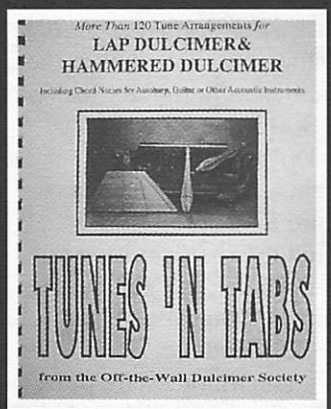

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What's New

by Neal Walters

Favorites Past and Present • *The Cincinnati Dulcimer Society, c/o Madge Moore, 4534 Forest Ave., Norwood, OH Madgelee2@aol.com (CD).*

Hills of Kentucky Dulcimers • *Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Club, c/o Joe Stoeckel, 5405 Cannas Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45238, 513-451-4996, www.HOKDulcimer.com (CD).*

It's dueling dulcimer clubs in the Cincinnati area as both the Cincinnati Dulcimer Society and the Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Club have released CDs that showcase their members. Both feature a wealth of traditional material and the spotlight is on the mountain dulcimer, but guitar, autoharp, hammered dulcimer, bass, flute, pennywhistle, mandolin, fiddle, spoons, banjomer and harmonica are present as well. The Cincinnati club includes two original songs in addition to sixteen traditional cuts. HOK features Stephen Siefert and his mom, Nancy, singing and playing Down the River I Go, along with several more contemporary songs. The mountain dulcimer is alive and well along the banks of the Ohio River.

Starry Island Night • *Barry Simon, 188 High Street, Rochester, MA 02770, 508-763-3950, barrysimon@msn.com, www.rshirley.com/barry.html (CD).*

Barry Simon is from Massachusetts and his hammered dulcimer playing takes center stage on his first CD release. Elaine Ryan joins him on pennywhistle, baroque bass and recorder on several tunes and Randy Hunicke also plays guitar on one cut. Includes Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, Sheebeg Sheemore, Enchantment (Pretty Little Dog/Over the Waterfall/Petronella).

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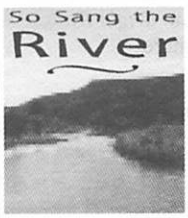

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Dinah is an artist-in-residence and part of the Healing Arts Program at the UVA Cancer Center. Fully two thirds of the proceeds from sales of this CD go to support the center. The CD consists of gentle and soothing sounds on Dinah's standard, baritone and bass dulcimers, occasionally combined with guitar, fretless electric bass, percussion, banjo, French horn, and bells on Julian of Norwich.

Hymns of Praise III and **Mountain Gospel Favorites** • *Michael Shull, 412 Ermine Road, W. Columbia, SC 29170, 803-796-2559, Michael@MichaelShull. com, www.michaelshull.com (Books).*

Michael Shull has released two new books of arrangements for mountain dulcimer. The first book is the third and final release in his *Hymns of Praise* series. There are twenty-three hymns in the book and they range from the very familiar to the somewhat obscure. All are in the key of D for dulcimers tuned to D-A-D. The twenty-five gospel selections in *Mountain Gospel Favorites* are also arranged in the key of D for D-A-D tuning and nearly all of these are jam session favorites.

Appalachian Sunday • *Michael Shull, Michael Shull, 412 Ermine Road, W. Columbia, SC 29170, 803-796-2559, www.michaelshull.com (CD).*

Michael Shull has yet another new CD release. This one serves as a companion to his book *Mountain Gospel Favorites* and contains fourteen gospel standards performed on dulcimer by Michael assisted by friends on fiddle, autoharp, bass, and guitar. Tunes include When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder, Never Grow Old, Life's Railway To Heaven, and The Unclouded Day.

Finger Pickin, Good and **Dulcimer Solos** • *Stephen Siefert, 217 Chimney Top Dr, Antioch, TN 37013, 615-731-2481, stephenseifert@hotmail.com, www. stephenseifert.com (Books).*

Stephen has released two new books of arrangements for mountain dulcimer. *Finger Pickin, Good* contains twenty-eight tunes, all but one arranged for fingerpicking the dulcimer in DAD. The arrangements are challenging, but not too hard. *Dulcimer Solos* contains the caveat "This is *hot* Stuff," and the twenty arrangements range from the fairly benign to the downright dangerous to your health.

Broken in Pieces, Mended in Love • *Carolyn Smith, 1052 E. 5th Ave, Durango, CO, 970-259-9711, carolynhsmith@frontier.net, www.singingsprucemusic.com (CD).*

Carolyn's newest CD is a collection of mostly hymns with a couple of classical pieces thrown in for good measure. She plays hammered dulcimer, assisted by Joy Smith on marimba and John Bryson on organ, with some added percussion from the "Old Folks at Home." Tunes include The Seven Hymns of Mary Baker Eddy, and Canon in D.

Wood Stoves and Bread Loaves • *John and Heidi Cerrigione, 56 Egypt Road, Ellington, CT 06029, 860-872-3264, heidi@doofus music.com, www.doofus music.com. (CD).*

John and Heidi Cerrigione have a new CD featuring Heidi on mountain dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, and banjomer. She also plays accordion and schweizer-orgeli (a Swiss accordion), while John plays guitar, mandolin, banjo and bass in a program of twenty songs and tunes. Selections include Wood Stoves and Bread Loaves, Koberli Walz, Prettiest Flowers, Will You Love Me When I'm Old, Valley Center, Big Eyed Rabbit.

Resonance • *Karla Armstrong, 6647 Manor Drive, Hanover, PA 17331, karlaarms@suscom.net (CD).*

Karla is a champion autoharp player who also plays hammered, mountain dulcimer and psaltery. Her first album is all-instrumental featuring gospel music. Coleen Walters helps out on bass. Selections include Just a Wayward Lamb, His Eye Is on the Sparrow, Going Home, and It Is Well with My Soul.

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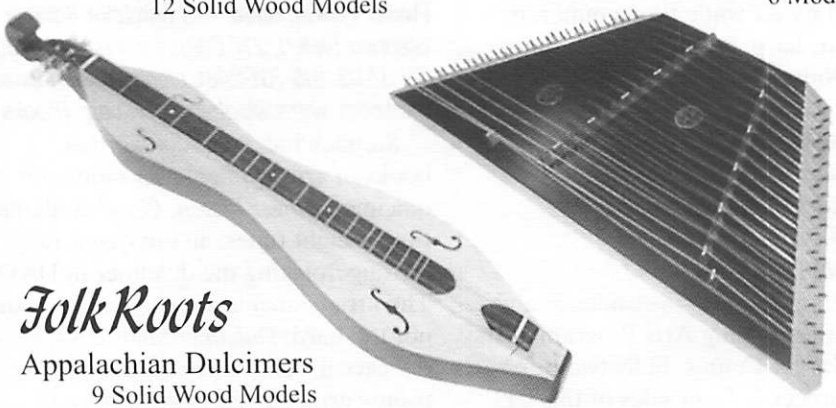

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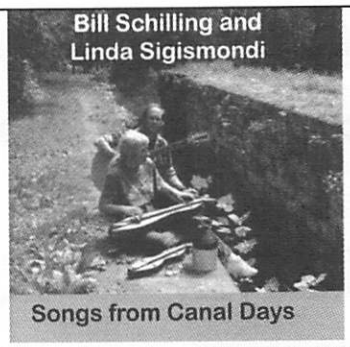

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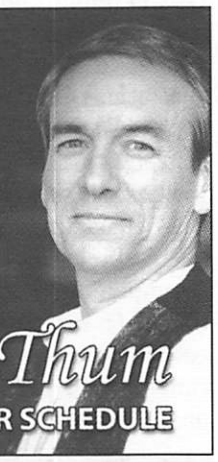

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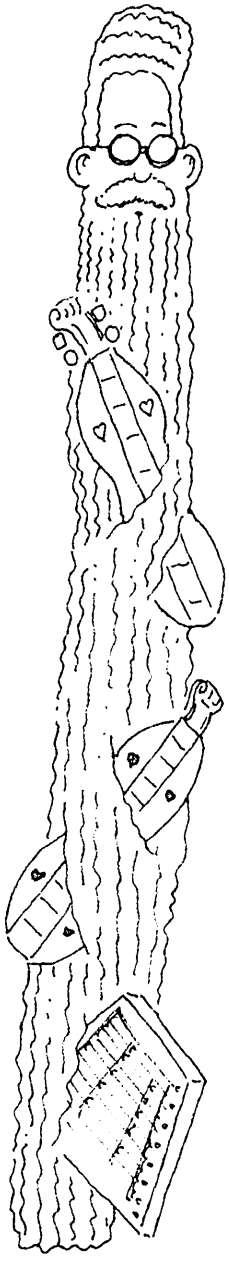

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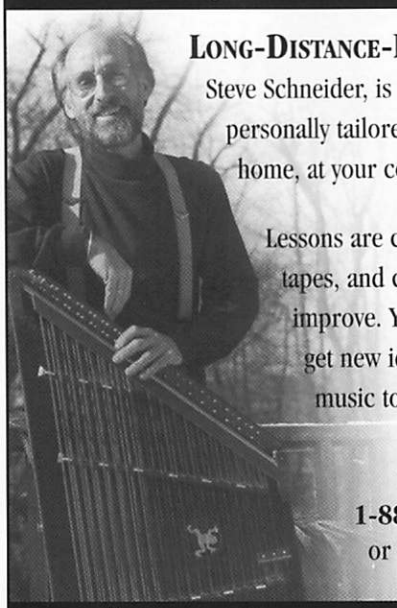

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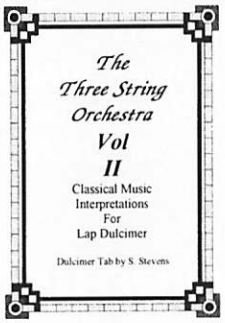

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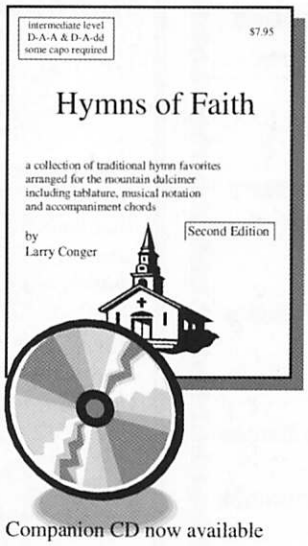

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